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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

APRIL 2026 | COMPLETE EDITION



GS I | GS II | GS III | GS IV | ESSAY | PRELIMS

All the month's major stories, with original analysis, maps, charts and practice

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Top stories this month

- **Gulf:** a US-Iran ceasefire, a naval blockade and India's evacuation of seafarers and students.
- **Parliament:** the 131st Amendment on women's reservation fails; Jan Vishwas 2.0 decriminalises 717 provisions.
- **Elections:** record turnouts in five States and UTs; the Supreme Court on voter-roll appeals.
- **Energy and science:** PFBR goes critical; record 256 GW peak demand; Artemis II flies farther than any crew before.
- **Weather:** a below-normal monsoon forecast, an El Nino watch and an April heatwave.

How to read this magazine

Did you know? | Map | Chart

Prelims pointer | Key points | Revision tick box

About this issue

- The April 2026 issue, with more topics than ever: every GS paper, Essay and Prelims, with maps, charts, fact boxes, an ethics case study and practice questions.
- Facts are as reported up to 30 April 2026. Election results, the Sabarimala verdict and the Gulf situation developed in May; check later updates.
- Maps are location diagrams (points by latitude and longitude, no boundaries). Use an official Survey of India map for India's boundaries.

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01 | HISTORY GS 1

Jallianwala Bagh at 107: The Massacre That Changed Indian Nationalism

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; the Rowlatt satyagraha; repression and the turn to mass politics

Context

On **13 April 2026** the country marked the 107th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The President said the tragedy had awakened 'a new consciousness and firm resolve for freedom', and the Prime Minister called it a reminder of the people's unyielding spirit. Families of the martyrs offered prayers at the Bagh in Amritsar.

What happened in 1919

- **The Rowlatt Act (March 1919)** allowed detention without trial and was called the 'black act'. Gandhi's call for a satyagraha against it was the first all-India protest he led.
- In Amritsar, local leaders **Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal** were arrested on 10 April, and protests followed.
- On **13 April 1919, Baisakhi day**, a crowd gathered in the walled garden of Jallianwala Bagh. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered troops to fire without warning on people who had only one narrow exit.
- The official toll was 379 dead; Indian estimates were far higher.

Response	Who	What it showed
Returned knighthood	Rabindranath Tagore	Moral rejection of colonial honours
Returned Kaisar-i-Hind medal	Mahatma Gandhi	The end of his faith in British justice
Hunter Committee (1919)	Government of India	Censured Dyer but imposed no real punishment
Shot Michael O'Dwyer in London (1940)	Udham Singh	Revolutionary memory of the massacre

Significance

- **From petitions to mass action.** The massacre, with the Khilafat issue, led directly to the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920).
- **The 'rule of law' unmasked.** It showed that colonial order finally rested on force, a point nationalists used for decades.
- **Memory and identity.** The memorial, run by the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust, is a site of national remembrance; its renovated complex opened in 2021.

Prelims Pointers

- Rowlatt Act: March 1919; based on the Sedition Committee chaired by Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt.
- Hunter Committee: the Disorders Inquiry Committee, set up in 1919.
- The Congress set up its own inquiry, which included Gandhi, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru.

02 | HISTORY GS 1

Ambedkar at 135: Equality, Education and Dignity on Campus

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Personalities; social reform movements; caste. GS2: Constitution; welfare of SCs; education

Context

14 April 2026 was the 135th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, declared a public holiday by the Centre and marked by States across the country. His idea that education is the first step to dignity is at the centre of a live debate on caste discrimination in higher education.

Life in milestones

Year	Milestone
1891	Born at Mhow (now Dr Ambedkar Nagar, Madhya Pradesh), 14 April
1920, 1927	Journals *Mooknayak* and *Bahishkrit Bharat*
1924	Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha founded
1927	Mahad Satyagraha for access to public water (Chavdar tank)
1932	Poona Pact with Gandhi: reserved seats in joint electorates
1936	Independent Labour Party; *Annihilation of Caste*
1947-49	Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly
1956	Embraced Buddhism at Nagpur (14 October); died 6 December
1990	Bharat Ratna (posthumous)

The campus question today

The **UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026** were notified in January 2026 to replace the 2012 rules. They grew out of a 2019 petition by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Dr Payal Tadvi. On 29 January 2026 the Supreme Court **stayed** them, calling parts vague and open to misuse, so the 2012 rules continue while the Centre reconsiders.

- **For strong rules:** the 2012 framework was rarely used; students need quick, independent remedies against segregation, biased evaluation and harassment.
- **For caution:** a vague definition of discrimination can hurt due process and divide campuses.
- **A middle path:** a precise definition with examples, equity committees with independent members, annual audits, and stronger scholarships and mentoring.

Did you know?

The Panchteerth are five places linked to Ambedkar: Mhow (birth), London (student years), Deekshabhoomi in Nagpur, Mahaparinirvan Sthal in Delhi and Chaitya Bhoomi in Mumbai.

Prelims Pointers

- Article 17 abolishes untouchability; Article 46 asks the State to promote the educational and economic interests of SCs and STs.
- Ambedkar attended all three Round Table Conferences (1930-32).

03 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

World Heritage Day 2026: Protecting Living Heritage in Emergencies

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian culture; heritage conservation. GS3: Disaster management

Context

The International Day for Monuments and Sites, better known as World Heritage Day, was observed on **18 April 2026**. ICOMOS chose the theme **'Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters'**.

Key Points

- **Living heritage** means traditions that communities still practise: rituals, festivals, crafts, performing arts and knowledge of nature. ICOMOS treats its tangible, intangible and natural sides together.
- The theme follows ICOMOS's scientific plan: 2025 was about preparedness, 2026 is about what to do when an emergency strikes.
- The year leads up to the ICOMOS General Assembly in Sarawak, Malaysia, in October 2026.

Why it matters for India

- Floods, cloudbursts and fires threaten Himalayan monasteries, riverside ghats and temple arts that are used every day, not just visited.
- Living heritage depends on people: when communities are displaced by a disaster, the practice can disappear even if the building survives.
- Heritage should be part of district disaster plans: inventories, trained volunteers, safe storage for movable objects and quick documentation after a disaster.

Did you know?

World Heritage Day was proposed by ICOMOS in 1982 and endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference in 1983. ICOMOS, founded in 1965, advises the World Heritage Committee.

04 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Asha Bhosle (1933-2026): A Voice Across Eight Decades

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian culture; music; personalities

Context

Playback singer **Asha Bhosle** died in Mumbai on **12 April 2026**, aged 92, after a brief illness. She was given a state funeral at Shivaji Park on 13 April.

Key Points

- Born on 8 September 1933 in Sangli, Maharashtra; younger sister of Lata Mangeshkar.
- Recorded her first film song in 1943 and sang more than 12,000 songs in many Indian and foreign languages.
- Known for range: classical-based songs, ghazals, cabaret numbers and pop, notably with composer R.D. Burman, whom she married.
- Honours: Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2000), Padma Vibhushan (2008); a Guinness World Record (2011) for the most studio recordings.

Her career shows how Hindi film music absorbed classical, folk and Western forms, and how playback singing became central to Indian popular culture.

05 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Two Chess Crowns in Sight: Vaishali Wins the Women's Candidates

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Personalities; sports and soft power

Context

The 2026 FIDE Candidates tournaments ended on **15 April** at Cap St Georges, Cyprus. India will now have a player in both world championship matches.

Event	Winner	Score	Next
Open Candidates	Javokhir Sindarov (Uzbekistan)	9.5/13, unbeaten, won with a round to spare	Challenges D. Gukesh (India) for the world title
Women's Candidates	R. Vaishali (India)	8.5/14, beat Kateryna Lagno in the last round	Challenges Ju Wenjun (China)

- Vaishali is the elder sister of grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa.
- The Sindarov-Gukesh match is reported to be the youngest world championship match ever.
- India's chess rise rests on State academies, online training and role models such as Viswanathan Anand; it is a good example of sport as soft power and of women in sport.

06 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

A Below-Normal Monsoon Forecast and an El Nino Watch

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian monsoon; ENSO and IOD; climate. GS3: Agriculture and food security

Context

On **13 April 2026** the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast this year's June-September rainfall at **92% of the Long Period Average (LPA), plus or minus 5%**, which falls in the 'below normal' category. On 9 April the US agency NOAA ended its La Nina advisory and issued an **El Nino Watch**, putting the chance of El Nino forming in May-July at **61%**.

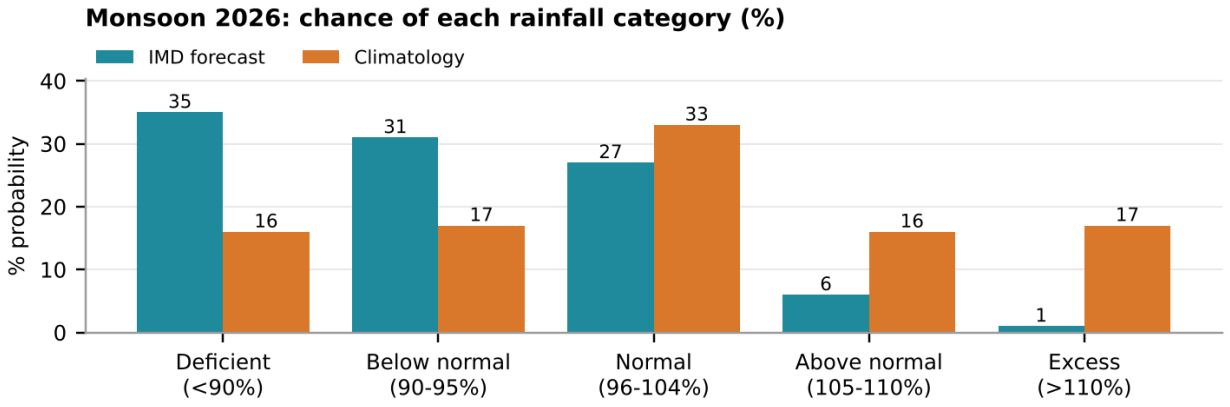


Chart. Two out of three chances are for a deficient or below-normal season, about double the usual. Source: IMD press release, 13 April 2026.

The science behind the forecast

- **El Nino:** warm water in the central and eastern Pacific shifts the Walker circulation, bringing sinking, dry air over India. 2002, 2009, 2014 and 2015 were El Nino years with weak monsoons.
- **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD):** neutral now, but a positive IOD (warmer western Indian Ocean) is likely late in the season and could partly offset El Nino, as it did in 1997.

- **Snow cover:** Northern Hemisphere snow cover in January-March was slightly below normal. Less snow lets Eurasia heat faster, which usually helps the monsoon.
- **Regions:** parts of the Northeast, Northwest and South Peninsula may still get normal or above-normal rain.

Key term	Meaning
LPA	Average all-India monsoon rainfall for 1971-2020: 87 cm
Normal monsoon	96-104% of the LPA
Nino 3.4 region	5N-5S, 170W-120W in the Pacific; El Nino is declared at a sustained anomaly of +0.5 C

Way forward

- District contingency crop plans with short-duration and drought-tolerant seeds.
- Careful reservoir releases, more micro-irrigation, and early use of the Drought Manual's indicators.
- Buffer stocks and import plans for pulses and edible oils to contain food inflation.

Did you know?
IMD will update the forecast in the last week of May. First-stage forecasts are often revised, so plans should be flexible.

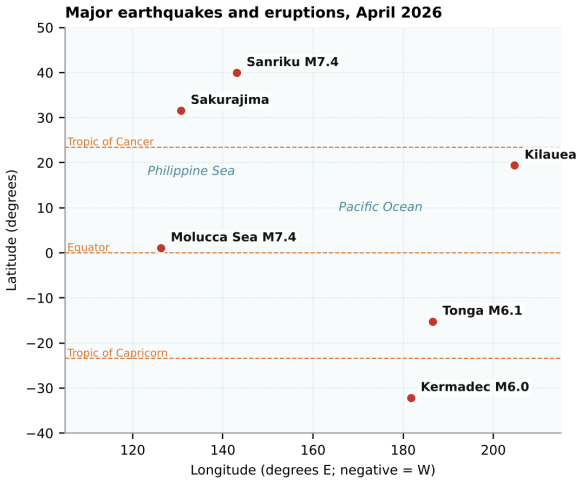
07 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Ring of Fire in April: Two M7.4 Quakes and Two Volcanoes

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes; plate tectonics. GS3: Disaster management

Context

The US Geological Survey (USGS) recorded **eight earthquakes of magnitude 6 or more** worldwide in April 2026, all around the Pacific Ring of Fire. Two reached M7.4. Two volcanoes of very different types also erupted.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Epicentres from the USGS catalogue; volcano points approximate. Longitudes east of 180 are shown continuously across the Pacific.

Sanriku, Japan (20 April)

- M7.4 (USGS; 7.7 on Japan's scale) about 100 km off Iwate, at a depth of about 25 km.
- The highest tsunami wave was **79 cm at Kuji**; about 10 people were hurt. Japan issued a **'megaquake advisory'**, raising the short-term chance of an M8+ quake from about 0.1% to 1%.
- Cause: thrust faulting at the **Japan Trench**, where the Pacific Plate dives under the Okhotsk microplate. This margin produced the 2011 Tohoku M9.0 earthquake.

Molucca Sea, Indonesia (1-2 April)

- M7.4 between Sulawesi and Halmahera, followed by an M6.3; at least one death and a small tsunami were reported.
- The Molucca Sea is the only place where two island arcs are colliding: a small plate is being swallowed on both sides, under the Sangihe and Halmahera arcs.

Two kinds of volcano

Volcano	Type and setting	Eruption style
Sakurajima, Japan (11 April)	Stratovolcano at a subduction zone	Explosive; ash column about 3.4 km (JMA)
Kilauea, Hawaii (episodes 44-45)	Shield volcano over a hotspot	Lava fountains of runny basalt

Did you know?
India's only active volcano, Barren Island in the Andamans, is also linked to subduction. INCOIS in Hyderabad runs India's tsunami warning centre.

Lessons for India

- Shallow offshore quakes are the tsunami risk: India watches the Andaman-Sumatra and Makran zones.
- Japan's low damage shows the value of strict building codes, seafloor sensors and clear public advisories.

08 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Afghanistan's Spring Floods: A Compound Mountain Disaster

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Western disturbances; mountain hazards. GS3: Disaster management

Context

Afghanistan's disaster agency reported on 4 April that heavy rain, flash floods, landslides and lightning had killed **77 people in ten days**, destroyed 793 homes and damaged 337 km of roads, including highways from Kabul to the north and east.

- **Cause:** spring rain from western disturbances falling on steep, bare Hindu Kush slopes, along with melting snow, produces fast runoff and debris flows.
- **Vulnerability:** mud-brick houses, few early warnings and limited humanitarian access.
- **Link to India:** western disturbances also bring north-west India its winter and spring rain and snow; India has sent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in past disasters.

Way forward

- Community early warning under the UN 'Early Warnings for All' initiative.
- Slope stabilisation, reforestation and safer housing in mountain valleys.
- Regional data sharing through bodies such as ICIMOD (Kathmandu), which monitors the Hindu Kush Himalaya.

Did you know?
No depression or cyclone formed over the North Indian Ocean in April 2026. Pre-monsoon cyclones such as Fani (2019) and Amphan (2020) usually come in May.

09 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Census 2027 Begins: India's First Digital Count

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Population and associated issues. GS2: Governance; data and privacy

Context

The first phase of Census 2027, the **Houselisting and Housing Census**, began on **1 April 2026**. For the first time households could **count themselves** online before enumerators visited. The President self-enumerated on 1 April and the Prime Minister on 2 April. More than **26 lakh households** had used self-enumeration by 22 April.

Key Points

- Houselisting runs from April to September 2026; each State or UT completes it within a 30-day window, after a self-enumeration window.
- The first round included Karnataka, Goa, Sikkim, Odisha, Mizoram, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep; others followed during April.
- Phase II, population enumeration including caste, is due in February 2027, with 1 March 2027 as the reference date (earlier for snow-bound areas).
- It will be the first census to count caste since 1931, apart from the separate SECC of 2011.

Why it matters

- Welfare targeting, the NFSA ration lists and urban classification have run on 2011 data for 15 years.
- The Census will also feed the next delimitation and the start of the women's reservation (see the 131st Amendment article).
- Houselisting data refresh indicators on housing, water, toilets and assets used by PMAY, Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat.

Concerns

- The digital divide: elderly, rural and tribal households may need enumerator help.
- Privacy and security of data collected through apps and portals.
- Political disputes over caste categories and over delimitation.

Did you know?

The Census is held under the Census Act, 1948; 'census' is Entry 69 of the Union List. The first synchronous census was in 1881, and Census 2027 will be the 16th.

10 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Jobs Data: Unemployment Rises to 5.1% in March

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Women and work; urbanisation. GS3: Employment

Context

The monthly Periodic Labour Force Survey bulletin for March 2026, released on **15 April**, showed unemployment for people aged 15 and above (current weekly status) rising to **5.1%** from 4.9% in February. Female labour force participation fell to **34.4%**.

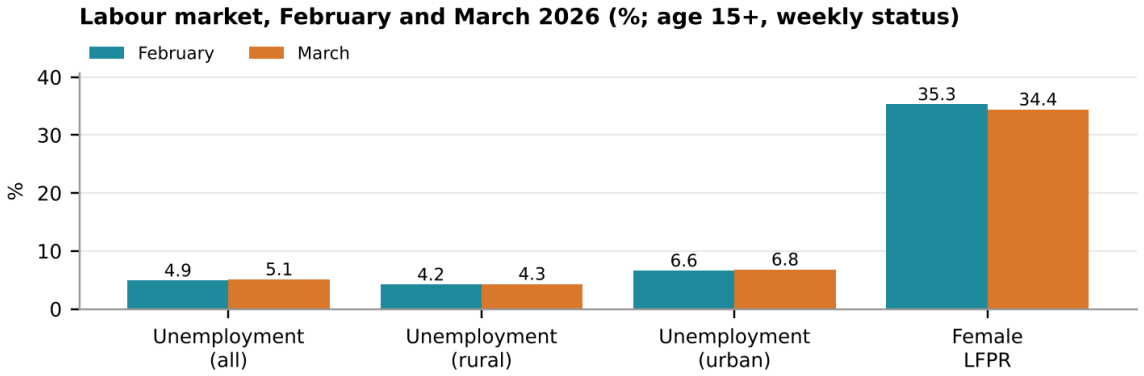


Chart. Overall LFPR fell from 55.9% to 55.4%; the survey covered about 3.75 lakh people. Source: MoSPI PLFS monthly bulletin, 15 April 2026.

Reading the numbers

- Urban unemployment remains well above rural unemployment, pointing to a shortage of formal jobs in cities.
- Rural women's work is seasonal; the rabi harvest pattern can move female participation by a point in a month.
- Monthly data, which began in 2025, are useful for policy but noisy; seasonally adjusted series would help.

Key term	Meaning
LFPR	Share of the population working or looking for work
WPR	Share of the population that is employed
Current weekly status	Activity in the last 7 days; 'usual status' uses the last 365 days

Way forward

- Childcare (the Palna crèches under Mission Shakti), safe transport and working women's hostels.
- Urban apprenticeships and skilling linked to local industry.

11 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

A Fragile Truce in the Gulf: Ceasefire, Blockade and India's Stand

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; effect of policies of other countries on India's interests; diaspora

Context

A two-week **US-Iran ceasefire** took effect on **8 April 2026**, with **Pakistan** as mediator. Talks in Islamabad on 11-12 April failed. On 12 April the US announced a naval blockade of ships bound for Iranian ports, and on 21 April it extended the ceasefire indefinitely while keeping the blockade.

Date	Development
5 April	Pakistan proposed a two-phase ceasefire; Iran offered its own 10-point plan
8 April	Two-week ceasefire takes effect; Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz
11-12 April	Islamabad talks (US Vice-President JD Vance; Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi and Speaker Ghalibaf) end without a deal after about 21 hours
12-13 April	US naval blockade of Iran-bound shipping; mine-clearing begins in the Strait
21 April	Ceasefire extended indefinitely; blockade stays

India's position

The Ministry of External Affairs welcomed the ceasefire, hoped it would bring 'lasting peace in West Asia', and called for **'unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz'**. It repeated India's line of de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy, and noted the conflict's 'immense suffering' and its damage to energy and trade networks.

Why it matters for India

- Much of India's crude oil, LPG and LNG passes through Hormuz; on 8 April only four ships crossed, against about nine a day during the war (as reported).
- Millions of Indians live in the Gulf, and their remittances matter to many States.
- Higher freight and insurance costs feed into inflation and the current account deficit.

Debate

- **Critics:** Pakistan gained diplomatic weight with both Washington and Tehran while India stayed on the sidelines.
- **Government view:** India's priorities are an end to the conflict, uninterrupted energy and the safety of its citizens, not a mediator's role.

Prelims Pointers

- The Strait of Hormuz lies between Iran and Oman's Musandam peninsula and links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
- India's Chabahar port is on the Gulf of Oman, outside the Strait.

12 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Bringing Indians Home: Seafarers, Students and the Caucasus Route

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Indian diaspora; consular diplomacy; role of the State in crises

Context

A government briefing on **6 April** set out the scale of India's effort to protect citizens caught up in the Gulf conflict.

Key numbers (as of 6 April)

- **16 Indian-flagged ships with 433 Indian seafarers** were still in the western Persian Gulf.
- More than **1,599 seafarers** had been brought home.
- Two LPG carriers, *Green Sanvi* and *Green Asha*, had crossed Hormuz in the previous two days.
- **1,777 Indians** had left Iran with embassy help, including 895 students and 345 fishermen.
- About **7.3 lakh passengers** had flown to India from the conflict region since 28 February.

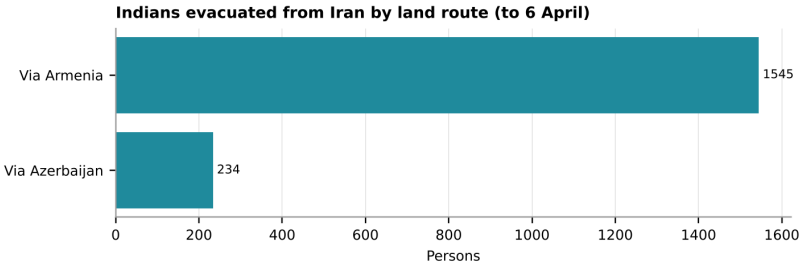


Chart. The two routes add up to 1,779, two more than the stated total of 1,777. Source: Government briefing as reported by IANS, 6 April 2026.

Significance

- With Gulf airspace and sea lanes disrupted, the land route through **Armenia and Azerbaijan** became the exit.
- Moving LPG carriers first reflects the priority on household cooking gas.
- India is one of the largest suppliers of seafarers; their welfare is both a diaspora issue and a source of soft power.
- The effort builds on Operation Ganga (Ukraine, 2022) and Operation Kaveri (Sudan, 2023).

Did you know?

Seafarer training standards are set by the IMO's STCW Convention. In India the Directorate General of Shipping, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, regulates seafarers.

13 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

After the Truce: India's Outreach to the UAE and Saudi Arabia

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral relations; India and West Asia; energy diplomacy

Context

Once the ceasefire took hold, India stepped up visits to the Gulf. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited the **UAE on 11-12 April**, and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited **Riyadh on 19 April** and met UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed in **Abu Dhabi** later in the month.

Visit	Focus
EAM in the UAE	The regional situation; review of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership; energy security
NSA in Riyadh	Meetings with Saudi energy, foreign and security officials
NSA in Abu Dhabi	Secure supply chains, Hormuz, intelligence sharing and economic ties

Why it matters

- The UAE and Saudi Arabia are major suppliers of crude and LPG and host the largest Indian communities abroad.
- Routes that bypass Hormuz, such as the UAE's Fujairah terminal and Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline to the Red Sea, matter more after the crisis.
- The visits also keep alive the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), announced at the G20 summit in New Delhi in 2023.

Prelims Pointers

- India-UAE CEPA: signed February 2022.
- India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council: set up in 2019.

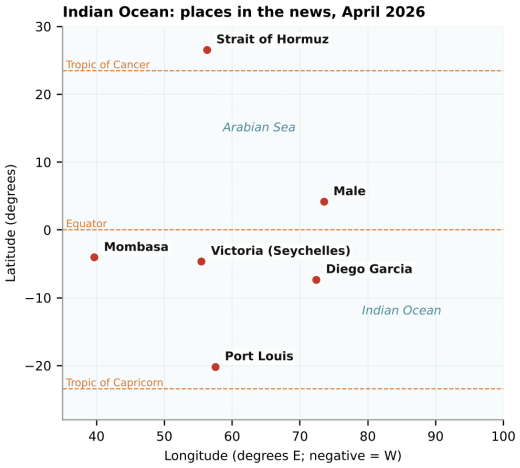
14 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

9th Indian Ocean Conference in Mauritius: Choke Points and Collective Stewardship

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; regional groupings; Indian Ocean

Context

The **9th Indian Ocean Conference**, organised by the India Foundation with the Government of Mauritius, was held in **Port Louis on 10-12 April 2026**, the first time in Africa. The theme was **'Collective Stewardship for Indian Ocean Governance'**.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Approximate points. Diego Garcia is in the Chagos Archipelago.

India's five priorities (EAM Jaishankar)

- Treat the ocean as one ecosystem.
- Overcome colonial legacies through regional integration.
- Adapt to a fragmented world where interdependence is used as a weapon.
- Manage choke points at sea (Hormuz, Malacca) and in technology, finance and knowledge.
- Build collective resilience in the Global South against shortages of food, fuel and fertiliser.

Meetings on the sidelines

- Mauritius President Dharambeer Gokhool and former PM Pravind Jugnauth.
- Seychelles Foreign Minister Barry Faure: India promised support for a Special Economic Package.
- Bhutan's Foreign Minister; Nepal's and Bangladesh's Foreign Ministers also attended.
- The Maldives reportedly stayed away because of its dispute with Mauritius over the Chagos Islands.

Why it matters

- It fits MAHASAGAR (2025), the wider version of the SAGAR vision, and India's role as first responder in the region.
- Support for small island states counters debt-driven influence from outside the region.

15 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister in Delhi: A Cautious Reset

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; water sharing; energy cooperation

Context

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister **Khalilur Rahman** visited New Delhi on **7-9 April**, the first high-level visit since the BNP government led by Tarique Rahman took office, and the most senior since the 2024 uprising. He met the External Affairs, Commerce and Petroleum Ministers and the NSA.

Issue	Bangladesh's ask	India's response
Fuel and fertiliser	More diesel through the Friendship Pipeline from Numaligarh	Will consider favourably once domestic needs are met
Ganga water	Renew the 1996 treaty, which expires in December 2026, on 'equitable and climate-resilient' terms	Talks to continue
Sheikh Hasina	Extradition	Cautious, given legal and political complications

Issue	Bangladesh's ask	India's response
Visas	Restore visas, especially medical	Under review

Assessment

Analysts called it cautious, issue-based engagement after 18 months of strain. Energy supply during the Gulf crisis gives India goodwill. Stability on the eastern border, connectivity to the Northeast, river sharing and China's role in Bangladesh make the relationship important.

Prelims Pointers

- The Ganga Water Treaty (1996) covers sharing at Farakka for 30 years.
- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline runs from Siliguri to Parbatipur; Numaligarh refinery is in Golaghat, Assam.

16 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-US Trade Talks Under a Temporary Tariff

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and the US; international trade agreements. GS3: External sector

Context

An Indian team led by Additional Secretary **Darpan Jain** held talks in Washington on **20-22 April** on the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement. Since the US Supreme Court struck down tariffs imposed under emergency powers, the US has applied a **temporary 10% tariff on imports from all countries for 150 days from 24 February 2026**, under Section 122 of its Trade Act of 1974.

- Late in April some outlets reported the sides were close to an interim deal; none had been signed by the end of the month (reported).
- India wants an edge over competitors when the 150-day window ends in late July.
- Sensitive areas include agriculture, dairy, data and pharmaceuticals.

Debate

- **For an early deal:** the US is India's largest export market, and certainty helps exporters.
- **For caution:** locking in concessions while US tariffs are temporary may give away too much; farm groups oppose opening agriculture and dairy.

Did you know?

Section 122 allows import surcharges of up to 15% for up to 150 days to deal with balance-of-payments problems. (The February issue said 15%; the rate applied was 10%.)

17 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Austrian Chancellor's Visit: First in Over 40 Years

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral relations; India and Europe; mobility partnerships

Context

Chancellor **Christian Stocker** made a four-day visit from mid-April, the first by an Austrian Chancellor since 1984, and held talks with Prime Minister Modi.

Key outcomes

- **Defence and security:** a Letter of Intent on military cooperation and a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.
- **Business:** a fast-track mechanism for investor issues.
- **Technology:** a cybersecurity dialogue; cooperation in quantum, machine learning, lasers and biotech.
- **Mobility:** the India-Austria Working Holiday Programme was operationalised; Austria launched a 'Focus India' student initiative.

Trade roughly doubled from US$1.08 billion in 2019-20 to US$2.06 billion in 2023-24, and about 160 Austrian firms work in India. The visit is part of India's outreach to Central Europe ahead of the India-EU free trade agreement.

Did you know?

Austria has been constitutionally neutral since 1955 and is not a NATO member. Vienna hosts the IAEA, UNIDO and OPEC.

18 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Myanmar: General Min Aung Hlaing Becomes President

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; border management; Act East

Context

On **3 April** Myanmar's Parliament elected junta chief **Min Aung Hlaing** President with 429 of 584 votes. He handed command of the armed forces to Gen. Ye Win Oo. The vote followed military-run elections that many observers said were neither free nor fair.

- India shares a border of about 1,643 km with Myanmar, touching Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
- Projects at stake: the Kaladan multimodal project (Sittwe port) and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.
- Concerns: insurgent groups, refugees in Mizoram and Manipur, the Free Movement Regime, and China's influence.

Western governments see a coup in civilian dress; India argues that working with whoever holds power protects its security and connectivity interests.

Did you know?

Myanmar's 2008 Constitution reserves a quarter of parliamentary seats for the military. The capital is Naypyidaw.

19 | POLITY GS 2

The 131st Amendment Bill Falls: Women's Reservation and Delimitation

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Constitutional amendments; Parliament; federalism; representation of women

Context

In a special sitting, the Law Minister introduced the **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026** in the Lok Sabha on **16 April**, along with a Delimitation Bill and a Union Territories Laws Bill. The aim was to bring the women's quota into force for the 2029 election, without waiting for delimitation after Census 2027. On **17 April** the amendment failed.

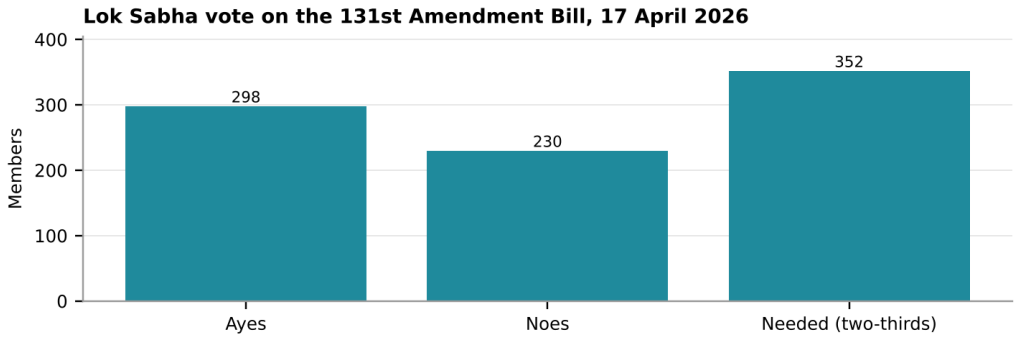


Chart. 528 members voted; the Bill fell 54 votes short. The two companion Bills were withdrawn. Source: Lok Sabha vote as reported (Hitavada, Vision IAS, SCC Online).

What the Bill proposed

- A Lok Sabha of up to **850 seats** (815 from States, 35 from UTs).
- A fresh delimitation so that the one-third quota for women could start sooner. Sources differ on the Census to be used (2011 or the new Census); check the Bill text.
- Amendments to Articles including 81, 82, 170, 330, 332 and 334A (as reported).

The constitutional background

- The **106th Amendment (2023)** inserted Articles 330A, 332A and 334A, but the quota begins only after delimitation based on the first Census published after the Act.
- Article 82: seat allocation has been frozen on the 1971 Census until the first Census after 2026 (42nd and 84th Amendments).
- Article 368(2): an amendment needs a majority of total membership and two-thirds of those present and voting.

The arguments

- **Government:** women's representation should not wait another census cycle; more seats would also raise SC and ST seats.
- **Opposition and southern States:** they back the quota on the existing 543 seats but oppose linking it to delimitation, which they fear would reward States with faster population growth.

Way forward

- Separate the women's quota from the seat-allocation question, or agree a formula that keeps each State's share.
- Build consensus through an all-party meeting or a Joint Parliamentary Committee before trying again.

20 | POLITY GS 2

Record Turnouts in Five Assembly Elections

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Election Commission; electoral reforms

Context

Assam, Kerala and Puducherry voted on **9 April**; Tamil Nadu and the first phase of West Bengal on **23 April**; and West Bengal's second phase on **29 April**. Several States reported their highest turnout ever. Results came on 4 May, after this issue's period.

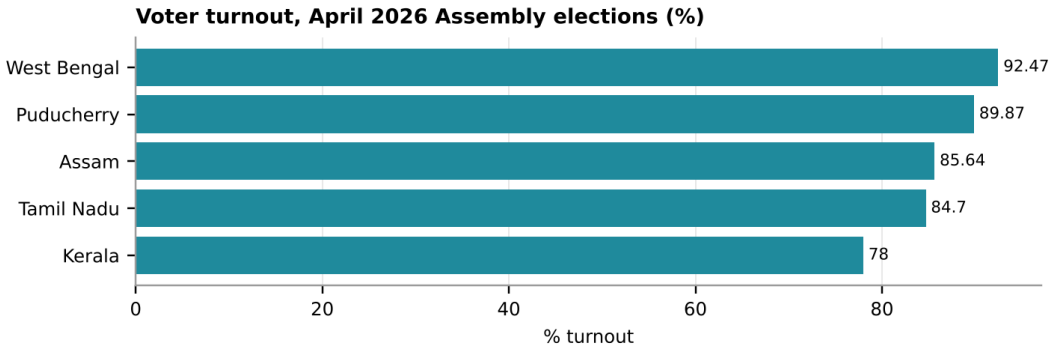


Chart. Kerala's figure is provisional at close of poll; Tamil Nadu is reported as 84.69-84.80%. Source: ECI figures as reported by Hitavada, WION and Organiser.

Key Points

- Assam: 85.64%, up from 82.04% in 2021; Dalgaon constituency was highest at 94.57%.
- Puducherry: 89.87%, reported as the highest since 1964.
- West Bengal: 92.47% across both phases, the State's highest since Independence; about 2,450 CAPF companies were deployed.

A caution about percentages

In West Bengal the special intensive revision cut the roll from 7.66 crore to 7.04 crore. A smaller roll raises the turnout percentage even if fewer people vote. Critics asked the ECI to publish absolute vote numbers quickly, not just percentages.

Did you know?

The Model Code of Conduct has no statutory basis; it rests on the consensus of political parties and is enforced by the ECI under Article 324.

21 | POLITY GS 2

Voter Roll Appeals in West Bengal: 'A Pending Appeal Is Not a Right to Vote'

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Representation of the People Act; judiciary

Context

In March the Supreme Court created **appellate tribunals**, headed by former High Court judges, to hear appeals against deletions in West Bengal's Special Intensive Revision (SIR). It said voters whose appeals succeeded before set dates in April could vote. On **24 April** a bench led by **Chief Justice Surya Kant** declined to hear fresh petitions, sent petitioners to the tribunals, and held that the **'mere pendency of appeal would not give anyone a right to vote'**.

Key Points

- The roll fell from 7.66 crore to 7.04 crore, a deletion of more than 61 lakh names.
- The tribunals add a court-made remedy on top of the statutory appeal under Section 24 of the RPA, 1950.
- Appeals not decided before polling day in effect keep the voter out of that election.

Two values in tension

- **Integrity:** rolls must list only eligible voters; the ECI's power comes from Article 324 and the RPA, 1950.
- **Inclusion:** large deletions just before an election, and slow appeals, fall hardest on poor and migrant voters.

Way forward

- Finish appeals before the election is notified.
- Restore names on the State's own records where eligibility is clear.
- Publish deletions by reason so that patterns can be checked.

Did you know?

In Lal Babu Hussein v Electoral Registration Officer (1995) the Supreme Court held that a person on the roll must be heard before being removed as a non-citizen.

22 | POLITY GS 2

Nine Judges, Seven Questions: The Sabarimala Reference

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Fundamental rights (Articles 14, 15, 25, 26); judiciary

Context

A **nine-judge Constitution Bench** led by Chief Justice Surya Kant began hearing the Sabarimala reference on **7 April 2026**. The bench, with Justice B.V. Nagarathna as its only woman member, is answering seven questions framed in 2019 on how courts should treat religious practices that conflict with equality.

The questions in brief

- How far can courts examine whether a practice is 'essential' to a religion?
- What does 'constitutional morality' mean, and does it limit religious freedom?
- How do the rights of religious denominations (Article 26) relate to other fundamental rights?

View	Argument
Religious autonomy	Courts should not decide theology; Article 26 protects how denominations manage their affairs

View	Argument
Equality and dignity	Excluding women by age or biology violates Articles 14, 15 and 17; constitutional morality must prevail

The answers will also shape cases on Parsi women's rights, female genital cutting in the Dawoodi Bohra community and Muslim women's entry to mosques. (The verdict was reserved in May, after this issue's period.)

Prelims Pointers

- Indian Young Lawyers Association v State of Kerala (2018): 4:1 for entry of women of all ages; Justice Indu Malhotra dissented.
- The essential religious practices test began with the Shirur Mutt case (1954).
- Article 145(3): at least five judges must hear a substantial question of constitutional interpretation.

23 | GOVERNANCE GS 2

Parliament in April: Jan Vishwas 2.0, a CAPF Law and Amaravati

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Parliament; government policies; trust-based governance; Centre-State relations

Context

Before the special sitting on the women's quota, Parliament passed three important Bills in the first days of April.

1. Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026

- Passed by the Lok Sabha on 1 April and the Rajya Sabha on 2 April.
- Amends **79 Central Acts** under **23 Ministries** and decriminalises **717 of 784** provisions; 67 provisions target ease of living.
- Many offences move from jail terms to civil penalties set by adjudicating officers. A 24-member Select Committee held 49 meetings on it.
- **Concerns:** weaker deterrence in areas like environment and consumer safety, and wide discretion for officials.

2. CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026

- Passed by the Lok Sabha by voice vote on 2 April, after the Rajya Sabha.
- Fixes deputation posts in the Central Armed Police Forces: **50% of Inspector General posts**, **at least 67% of Additional DG posts**, and all Special DG and DG posts.
- **Debate:** IPS officers bring coordination with States, but cadre officers worry about stagnation and morale.

3. Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026

- Passed on 2 April; gives **Amaravati statutory status as the sole capital** of Andhra Pradesh.
- Putting the capital in a Central law makes another change by the State harder; a 2020 three-capitals law had been repealed in 2021.
- **Question:** should Parliament settle a State's capital, normally a State decision? Supporters point to certainty for investors and for farmers who pooled land.

Did you know?

The first Jan Vishwas Act (2023) amended 183 provisions in 42 Acts.

24 | POLITY GS 2

Judicial Accountability and Pendency: The Supreme Court's April

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; removal of judges; judicial reforms

Context

Two stories raised questions about how the higher judiciary governs itself.

A resignation during removal proceedings (reported)

Justice **Yashwant Varma** reportedly resigned on **9 April** while removal proceedings against him were pending (single source; check before use). No law says whether an inquiry under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 should continue after a judge resigns.

- **For continuing:** findings matter for public trust and for decisions on post-retirement benefits.
- **Against:** removal is the only remedy the Act provides, so resignation makes it moot.
- **Reform:** amend the 1968 Act so that an inquiry can finish and record its findings.

The Court's own numbers

Key numbers (SC Observer, April 2026)

- Pendency of about **92,823 cases** at the end of April.
- About 3,525 PILs pending, some 700 of them for over ten years.
- The M.C. Mehta environmental petition, pending since 1984, was closed.
- The Court is exploring artificial intelligence for listing cases, raising questions about the Chief Justice's role as master of the roster.

Prelims Pointers

- Removal of a Supreme Court judge: Article 124(4); a motion needs 100 Lok Sabha or 50 Rajya Sabha members to begin.
- No judge has been removed; the motion against Justice V. Ramaswami failed in 1993.
- Sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court: 34 including the Chief Justice.

25 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

World Health Day 2026: 'Stand with Science'

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; international institutions. GS3: One Health and AMR

Context

WHO marked World Health Day on **7 April 2026** with the theme **'Together for Health. Stand with Science'**, focused on rebuilding trust in science and promoting **One Health**, the idea that human, animal, plant and environmental health are linked.

- France hosted an International One Health Summit on the same day under its G7 presidency (reported).
- WHO held its first global forum of WHO Collaborating Centres on 7-9 April, with about 800 institutions from over 80 countries (reported).

Why it matters for India

- Zoonoses such as Nipah and bird flu, and antimicrobial resistance, cross the line between human and animal health.
- Misinformation and vaccine hesitancy undermine programmes like the HPV vaccination drive.
- Health, animal husbandry and environment departments often work in separate silos at district level.

Way forward

- Joint surveillance across human, animal and environmental health.
- Training ASHAs and ANMs in science communication.
- Open, timely health data and more public spending on research.

Did you know?
WHO was founded on 7 April 1948. The One Health 'Quadripartite' is FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAH.

26 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Heatstroke Units in Every Hospital: The Health Ministry's Heat Plan

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; vulnerable sections; Centre-State coordination

Context

As temperatures rose, the Union Health Secretary wrote to all States on **23 April** and, on **28 April**, asked Chief Secretaries to set up **dedicated heatstroke units in all health facilities**, keep ambulances ready, spread early warnings and report heatstroke cases in real time on the **IHIP** portal. IMD expected above-normal heatwave days from April to June over parts of East, Central and North-West India.

Heat as a social justice issue

- Outdoor and informal workers, the elderly, children, pregnant women and slum residents carry most of the risk.
- Heat deaths are under-counted because death certificates rarely name heat as the cause.
- Workers who lose a day's wage if they stay home cannot simply 'avoid the sun'.

Way forward

- Rules on working hours, shade, water and rest for outdoor work.
- Ward-level heat-vulnerability maps and city Heat Action Plans (Ahmedabad was first, in 2013).
- Parametric heat insurance to replace lost wages.

Did you know?
Heat illness surveillance runs under the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health. IHIP is the digital platform of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme.

27 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

8th Poshan Pakhwada: Nutrition for the Growing Brain

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Welfare schemes for children; nutrition; early childhood education

Context

Women and Child Development Minister **Annapurna Devi** launched the **8th Poshan Pakhwada**, held from **9 to 23 April 2026**, on maximising brain development in the first six years of life.

Four focus areas

- Nutrition of mothers and infants: exclusive breastfeeding and the right complementary food.
- Early stimulation and responsive care for children up to three.
- Play-based learning for children aged three to six, to get them ready for school.
- Less screen time for young children.

More than 85% of brain development happens by age six. The campaign widens 'nutrition' into early childhood care and education, matching the NEP 2020 foundational stage. About 14 lakh Anganwadi centres serve some 8.9 crore beneficiaries (reported).

Challenges

- Stunting remains high: 35.5% of children under five in NFHS-5 (2019-21).
- Anganwadi workers are overloaded and poorly paid; many centres lack play materials.
- Poshan Tracker data need independent checks.

Did you know?

POSHAN Abhiyaan began on 8 March 2018 in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. Poshan Maah is held in September and Poshan Pakhwada in March-April.

28 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

Global Report on Food Crises 2026: Two Famines in One Year

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Important international reports; poverty and hunger; humanitarian law

Context

The **Global Report on Food Crises 2026**, released on **24 April** by the Global Network Against Food Crises (FAO, WFP, UNICEF, the EU and others), found that acute hunger has roughly doubled in a decade.

Key numbers (2025 data)

- **266 million people** in acute food insecurity in 47 countries and territories.
- **35.5 million children** acutely malnourished; nearly 10 million severely.
- Nine times as many people in 'catastrophe' (IPC Phase 5) as in 2016.
- For the first time in the report's history, **famine was confirmed in two places in one year**: Gaza Governorate and parts of Sudan.

Ten countries hold two-thirds of acute hunger, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan in India's neighbourhood. Conflict is the main driver, followed by climate and economic shocks, while aid funding is falling.

Way forward

- Move from emergency response to early action before crises peak.
- Protect humanitarian access; UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018) condemns starving civilians as a method of war.
- India can extend food diplomacy to its neighbours.

Did you know?
The report covers acute crises only; chronic hunger is measured by the UN's SOFI report and the Global Hunger Index.

29 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

World Malaria Day: India's Last Mile to Elimination

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; tribal welfare. GS3: Vector-borne disease and drug resistance

Context

World Malaria Day on **25 April 2026** carried the theme **'Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must.'** India aims for **zero indigenous cases by 2027** and **elimination by 2030**.

- India cut cases by about 80% between 2015 and 2023 and left WHO's 'High Burden to High Impact' group in 2024 (reported).
- Remaining cases are concentrated in tribal, forest and border districts of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and the Northeast, so malaria is now an equity issue.
- Globally, WHO counted about 6.1 lakh deaths in 2024; 47 countries have been certified malaria-free.

Threats

- Partial resistance to artemisinin drugs in South-East Asia and Africa.
- *Anopheles stephensi*, an urban mosquito, spreading in cities.
- *P. vivax* hides in the liver and causes relapses.

Way forward

- Case-by-case surveillance and the '1-3-7' approach: report in 1 day, investigate in 3, respond in 7.
- ASHA-led test-and-treat in remote areas and long-lasting insecticidal nets.
- Cross-border cooperation with neighbours.

Did you know?
WHO recommends two malaria vaccines: RTS,S (2021) and R21/Matrix-M (2023). R21 is made by the Serum Institute of India.

30 | ECONOMY GS 3

RBI Holds at 5.25%: Waiting Out an Oil Shock

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Monetary policy; inflation; growth

Context

At the first meeting of 2026-27 on **8 April**, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee kept the **repo rate at 5.25%** for a second time, with a **neutral stance**. It cut its growth projection for 2026-27 to **6.9%** and projected inflation at **4.6%**, the first projection on the new CPI series (base 2024=100).

Rate or ratio	Level
Repo rate	5.25%
Standing Deposit Facility (floor)	5.00%
Marginal Standing Facility and Bank Rate (ceiling)	5.50%
CRR / SLR	3.00% / 18.00%

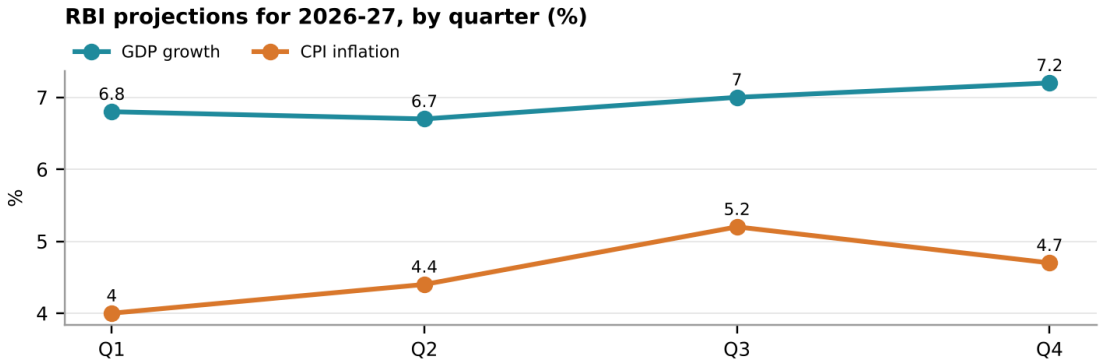


Chart. Assumes Indian-basket crude at US$85 a barrel, the rupee at 94 per dollar and a normal monsoon. Source: RBI policy of 8 April 2026, as summarised by Kotak MF and Drishti IAS.

The reasoning

- **Risks:** the West Asia conflict, disruption at Hormuz, higher energy and freight costs, and a possible El Nino.
- **Supports:** private consumption, investment, services and healthy bank and company balance sheets.
- The 2025-26 growth estimate is 7.6% on the new GDP series (base 2022-23).

Debate

- **For holding:** the price rise is imported and may pass; raising rates would hurt growth that is already slowing.
- **For caution:** inflation is projected above 4% from Q2 and peaks at 5.2% in Q3; a weak rupee adds imported inflation, leaving little room for cuts.

Prelims Pointers

- The MPC is set up under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act, 1934; six members, with the Governor holding a casting vote.
- Inflation target: 4% CPI with a band of 2-6%, set by the Centre under Section 45ZA.

31 | ECONOMY GS 3

Prices Turn Up: Wholesale Inflation at a 38-Month High

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Inflation; industrial growth; indicators

Context

Retail inflation (CPI, new series) rose to **3.40%** in March from 3.21% in February. Wholesale inflation (WPI) jumped to **3.9%** from 2.1%, its highest in 38 months, as energy prices climbed. Industrial output (IIP) grew 4.1% in March and 4.1% over 2025-26.

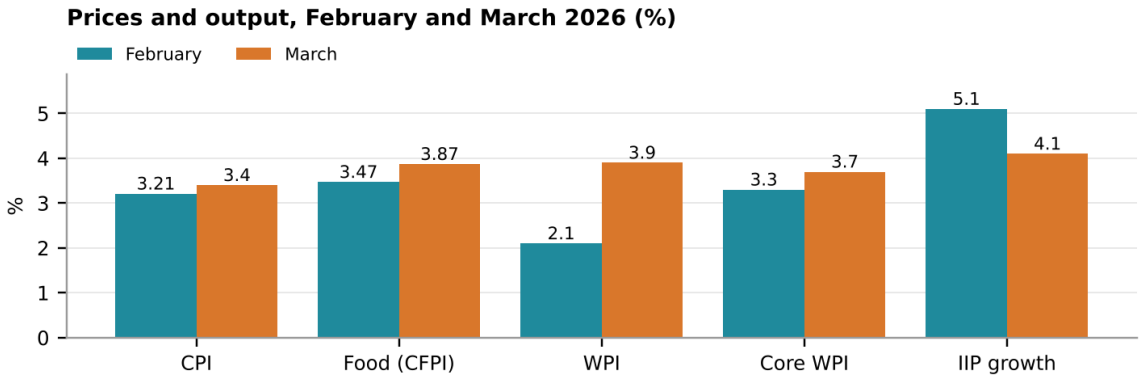


Chart. February IIP is the revised figure. Energy explained about 150 of the 175 basis-point rise in WPI. Source: MoSPI CPI (13 April) and IIP (28 April) releases; ICRA note on WPI (15 April).

Inside the numbers

- **CPI:** silver jewellery (+149%), gold jewellery (+46%) and tomatoes (+36%) rose fastest; onions, potatoes and garlic fell. Precious metals are acting as safe havens during the war.
- **WPI:** core (non-food manufactured) WPI hit a 41-month high of 3.7%, so cost pressure is spreading; ICRA expected April WPI near 4.8%.
- **IIP:** capital goods grew 14.6% in March, a sign of investment; consumer non-durables grew only 1.1%, a sign of weak mass consumption. Over the year, mining grew 1.4% and electricity 1.0%.

Prelims Pointers

- CPI is compiled by the NSO (MoSPI); WPI by the Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT. WPI does not cover services.
- The IIP base year is 2011-12; manufacturing has the largest weight.

32 | ECONOMY GS 3

April's Growth Forecasts: A Slower 2026-27 for India

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Growth; international economic institutions; global outlook

Context

Every major forecast released in April expected India to slow from 7.6% in 2025-26 while staying the fastest-growing large economy. The IMF cut world growth because of the West Asia war.

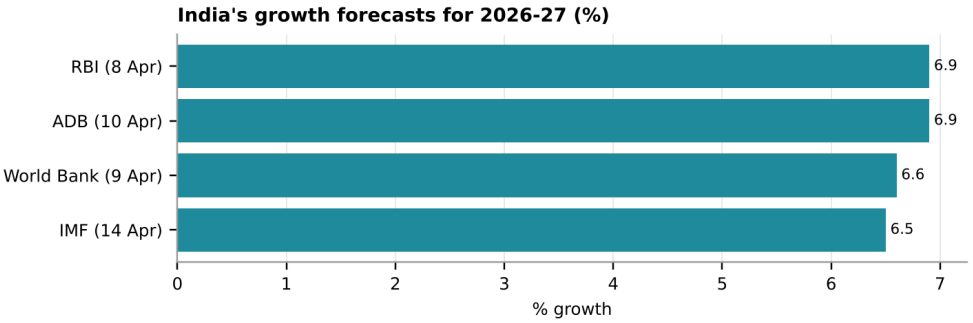


Chart. The IMF figure is for 2026 (equivalent to 2026-27); the World Bank raised its forecast from 6.3%. Source: RBI; ADB news release; AIR (World Bank); IASGyan and WION (IMF).

Report	Main points
IMF World Economic Outlook	World growth 3.1% in 2026 (3.4% without the war); global inflation 4.4%; oil about US$82; a downside case of 2.5% growth. India raised to 6.5%
World Bank South Asia Update	India 6.6%; supports are low inflation, GST cuts and trade deals with the UK and EU; risk from energy prices
ADB Asian Development Outlook	India 6.9% in 2026-27 and 7.3% in 2027-28; inflation 4.5% then 4.0%

What it means

- The risks are external: oil, trade and capital flows. India's strength lies in domestic demand and lower reliance on goods exports.
- The global picture is 'stagflationary': lower growth with higher inflation.

Did you know?
The ADB (founded 1966, Manila) labels years by India's fiscal year: its 'FY2026' means April 2026 to March 2027.

33 | ECONOMY GS 3

Record US$860 Billion Exports, but a Wider Trade Deficit

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; balance of payments; services exports

Context

Data released on **15 April** showed India's total exports of goods and services reached a record **US$860.09 billion in 2025-26**, up 4.22%. But imports grew faster (6.47%), so the overall trade deficit widened to **US$119.30 billion** from US$94.66 billion.

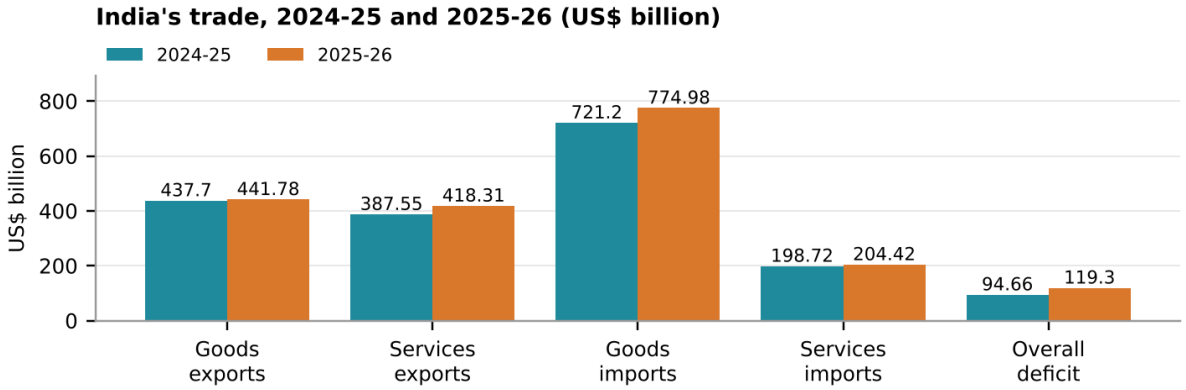


Chart. Services exports grew about 7.9%; goods exports about 0.9%. Source: Commerce Ministry data as reported by KNN India, 15 April 2026.

Reading the trend

- Services, led by IT and Global Capability Centres, now make up nearly half of exports.
- Goods exports are flat despite PLI schemes and new trade deals; the goods deficit was about US$333 billion (our calculation).
- Higher oil and gold import bills could widen the current account deficit in 2026-27.

Did you know?

The government's target is US$2 trillion of exports by 2030. Merchandise trade data are compiled by DGCI&S, Kolkata; services data by the RBI.

34 | ECONOMY GS 3

A New Income-tax Act and a GST Milestone

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Taxation; fiscal policy; ease of doing business. GS2: Fiscal federalism

Context

On **1 April 2026** the **Income-tax Act, 2025** replaced the Income-tax Act, 1961. The same day, GST data showed collections of about **Rs 2 lakh crore** in March and **Rs 22.27 lakh crore** for 2025-26.

Income-tax Act, 2025

- A single **'tax year'** replaces 'previous year' and 'assessment year'.
- Form 16 becomes a digital **Form 130** under the Income-tax Rules, 2026.
- Search powers extend to 'virtual digital space' such as email and cloud storage; virtual digital assets can count as undisclosed income.
- The aim is simpler language rather than new rates or slabs.
- **Concerns:** privacy (Puttaswamy, 2017) and disputes during the switch from the old law.

GST in 2025-26

Measure	Amount	Growth
Gross GST, 2025-26	Rs 22.27 lakh crore	8.3%
Net GST, 2025-26	Rs 19.34 lakh crore	7.1%
Gross GST, March 2026	About Rs 2.0 lakh crore	8.8%
Import GST, March 2026	Rs 53,861 crore	17.8%

These are the first full-year numbers since 'GST 2.0' in September 2025, which moved most goods to two slabs (5% and 18%) plus 40% on luxury and sin goods. Domestic collections grew more slowly than import collections, which matters for State finances now that compensation has ended.

Prelims Pointers

- Article 265: no tax without authority of law.
- GST Council: Article 279A; decisions need a three-fourths weighted majority (Centre one-third of the weight, States two-thirds).

35 | ECONOMY GS 3

UPI at Ten, and Reserves as a Buffer

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Digital payments; financial inclusion; external sector

UPI turns 10

The Unified Payments Interface, launched on **11 April 2016**, completed ten years. Volumes have grown about 12,000 times since launch (reported). March 2026 saw the highest monthly value ever, about Rs 29.5 lakh crore (reported).

- UPI is India's best-known piece of Digital Public Infrastructure and is accepted in several countries.
- **Open questions:** the zero merchant discount rate leaves little money for security and innovation; two apps dominate; fraud is rising.

Forex reserves

Reserves rebounded to **US$697.12 billion** in the week to 3 April, up about US$9 billion, after falling in March. Gold rose to about US$120 billion, roughly 17% of reserves. The RBI's projections assume a rupee of 94 per dollar.

- Weekly swings come mainly from revaluation of gold and currencies and from RBI intervention.
- Reserves are India's main buffer against an oil shock, a wider trade deficit and capital outflows.

Prelims Pointers

- NPCI (2008) is a not-for-profit company promoted by the RBI and the Indian Banks' Association.
- Reserves have four parts: foreign currency assets, gold, SDRs and the reserve tranche position with the IMF.

36 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

Fertiliser Subsidy and a Rain-Hit Wheat Harvest

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Farm subsidies; MSP and procurement; food security

Nutrient Based Subsidy for Kharif 2026

On **8 April** the Cabinet approved **Rs 41,534 crore** for phosphatic and potassic fertilisers for Kharif 2026 (1 April to 30 September), about Rs 4,317 crore more than Kharif 2025. Twenty-eight grades, including DAP and NPK mixes, are covered.

- Urea is outside NBS and keeps a fixed price, which critics say tilts use towards nitrogen and harms soil health (the ideal N:P:K ratio is about 4:2:1).
- A bigger subsidy reflects costlier imported inputs; the outgo swings with world prices.

Wheat procurement

Rain in late March and early April damaged grain. In Punjab and Haryana, procurement in the first half of April fell **69%** as about 20% of grain arriving was shrivelled or broken, against FCI's normal limit of 6%. Haryana relaxed norms on 16 April, and on **25 April** the Centre raised the national target by 15%, from **30 to 34.5 million tonnes**.

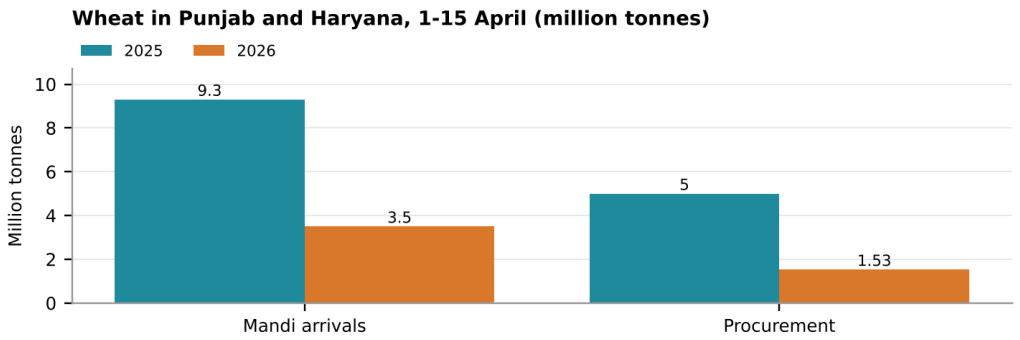


Chart. MSP for 2026-27 is Rs 2,585 a quintal. Norms were relaxed in Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Source: Business Standard, about 15 April 2026.

Issues

- Relaxing quality norms lets farmers sell at MSP rather than at distress prices.
- But lower-grade grain stores less well and may lose value, and large stocks raise storage costs.
- Weather at harvest time (heat in March, rain in April) is now a recurring risk.

Did you know?
NBS has been in force since 1 April 2010. MSP is recommended by the CACP and approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

37 | ECONOMY GS 3

A Record 256 GW Peak and a Record Solar Year

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy; infrastructure; renewable energy

Context

On **25 April 2026**, during an early heatwave, India met an all-time peak electricity demand of **256.1 GW** with no shortage. FY26 data released in April also showed record solar additions of about **44.6 GW**, taking cumulative solar past **150 GW**.

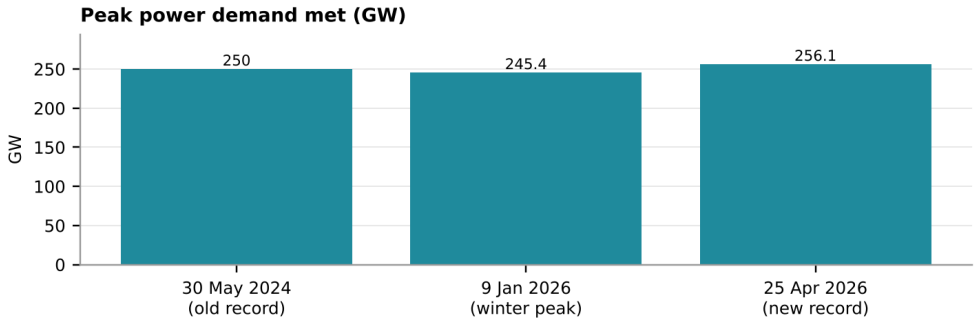


Chart. Electricity use in April (to the 27th) was about 8.9% higher than a year earlier. Source: Ministry of Power, as reported by Renewable Watch, 29 April 2026.

Solar in 2025-26	Figure
Added in the year	About 44.6 GW (+87%), plus about 6 GW of wind
Cumulative solar (31 March 2026)	150.26 GW, about 55% of some 275 GW of renewables
Rooftop added	About 8.7 GW, driven by PM Surya Ghar
Top States for additions	Rajasthan 12.1 GW, Gujarat 9.0 GW, Maharashtra 6.2 GW

Challenges

- The peak now comes earlier in the year because of heat-driven cooling demand.
- Solar covers the afternoon; the evening peak still relies on coal, hydro and scarce storage.
- Transmission lags, some power purchase agreements remain unsigned, and cells and wafers still come largely from China.

Did you know?
Captive and commercial coal mines produced a record 210.46 million tonnes in 2025-26 (+10.2%), but total coal output was about 1.04 billion tonnes, roughly flat (reported).

38 | ECONOMY GS 3

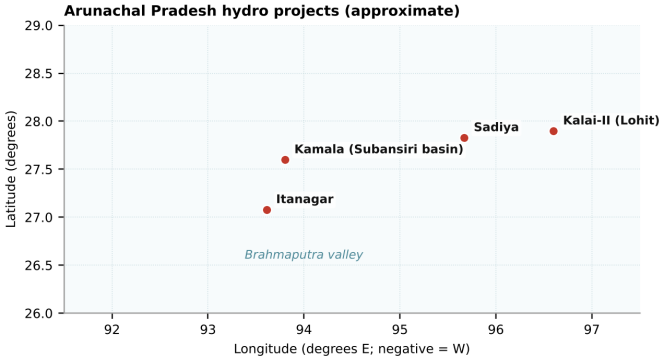
Two Big Dams for Arunachal: Kalai-II and Kamala

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy; infrastructure; Northeast; environmental impact

Context

The Cabinet approved two hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh worth about **Rs 40,000 crore** (8-9 April).

Project	Capacity	Location	Cost	Notes
Kalai-II	1,200 MW	Anjaw district, Lohit basin	Rs 14,106 crore	First hydro project in the Lohit basin; 78 months
Kamala	1,720 MW	Kamle, Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey	Rs 26,070 crore	NHPC-State joint venture; Rs 4,744 crore for flood moderation; 96 months



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. The Lohit joins the Siang near Sadiya to form the Brahmaputra; the Kamala is a tributary of the Subansiri.

Why they matter

- Hydropower gives firm, flexible power to balance solar and wind.
- Kamala has a stated flood-control role in the Brahmaputra basin.
- The State gets 12% free power plus 1% for local development; there is also strategic value, given China's dam building on the Yarlung Tsangpo.

Concerns

- High seismic risk in the Eastern Himalaya; biodiversity loss; displacement.
- Cumulative impact of many dams in one basin; long delays in earlier projects such as Subansiri Lower.

39 | ECONOMY GS 3

Ports, Metro and Rail: April's Infrastructure Push

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Infrastructure; ports; urban transport; logistics

Ports

India's 12 major ports handled a record **915.17 million tonnes** in 2025-26, up 7.06% and above target. Deendayal (Kandla) led, followed by Paradip and JNPA.

Jaipur Metro Phase-2 (Cabinet, 8 April)

- A 41 km north-south corridor from Prahladpura to Todi Mod with 36 stations; Rs 13,037.66 crore; completion by September 2031.
- Built by a 50:50 Centre-State joint venture under the Metro Rail Policy 2017.

Rail

- Fourth lines approved: Sainthia-Pakur (81.2 km) and Santragachi-Kharagpur (133.78 km), about Rs 4,474 crore together, to ease busy freight and suburban routes.
- Vande Bharat trains carried 39.8 million passengers in 2025-26, up 34% (reported).

Issues

- Many metros carry fewer riders than projected; land acquisition and cost overruns are common.
- India still depends on foreign transshipment hubs; rail and road links to ports lag.

Did you know?
Major ports are governed by the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021. The National Rail Plan aims for a 45% rail share of freight by 2030.

40 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Draft Tar-ball Rules: Making Polluters Pay for Oil on Beaches

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Pollution; coastal environment; environmental law

Context

On **3 April 2026** the Environment Ministry published the draft **Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026** under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, with 60 days for comments. It is the first legal framework for the sticky lumps of weathered oil that wash up on India's west coast every monsoon.

Key Points
- Tar-balls are treated as **hazardous waste**.
- Oil companies, ships, tanker owners and offshore operators ('generators') must follow the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan.
- District authorities collect the waste and send it to treatment facilities; the Coast Guard helps with surveillance.
- Tar-balls can be burnt in cement kilns or incinerators because they have high energy content.
- Environmental compensation can be charged on polluters who fail to prevent spills and on authorities who fail to clean up.

Challenges

- Tracing a tar-ball to its source needs oil 'fingerprinting' labs.
- Coastal districts have few hazardous-waste facilities; fishers often clean up without protection.

Did you know?
Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala are most affected. The Indian Coast Guard coordinates oil-spill response in Indian waters; MARPOL Annex I covers oil pollution from ships.

41 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Plastic Rules Amended: Recycled Content and Reuse Targets

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Waste management; circular economy

Context

The final **Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026** were notified on **31 March** and reported in early April. (The March issue described the rules as a draft; they are now final.)

Key Points

- Rigid plastic packaging (Category I) must contain **30% recycled plastic** in 2025-26, rising to **60% by 2028-29**.
- Reuse targets for rigid beverage packaging rise from 10% to 25%; for drinking-water containers, from 70% to 85%.
- Recycled-plastic packaging must meet IS 14534:2023 and show recycled content on the label; food-contact packaging must meet FSSAI norms.

The amendment moves Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) from collection targets towards a circular economy of recycling and reuse.

Challenges

- Fake EPR certificates and weak tracking of informal recyclers.
- Little food-grade recycling capacity.
- Waste pickers are not yet part of the formal system.

Did you know?
EPR categories: I rigid, II flexible, III multilayer, IV compostable. Plastic carry bags must be at least 120 microns thick.

42 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

A Warm April and Earth Day's Call: 'Our Power, Our Planet'

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Climate change; global warming; public participation

Copernicus: April 2026

- Global air temperature was **1.43 C above pre-industrial**, tying with 2016 and 2020 as the joint **third-warmest April**.
- Sea-surface temperature (60S-60N) was **21.00 C**, second only to April 2024 (21.04 C).
- The 12 months to April averaged 1.42 C above pre-industrial; Copernicus expects El Nino to develop.

Earth Day (22 April)

The 56th Earth Day had the theme **'Our Power, Our Planet'**, calling for collective action and renewable energy. It links to India's Mission LiFE and to its target of 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030.

- El Nino and warm oceans raise the risk of heatwaves, a weak monsoon and coral bleaching.
- Symbolic days matter only if they lead to lasting change, measured in outcomes.

Did you know?
Earth Day began in the US in 1970 and went global in 1990. The UN calls 22 April 'International Mother Earth Day'. Copernicus is the EU's Earth observation programme; its climate service is run by ECMWF.

43 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Carbon Prices at Home and at Sea: CCTS and the IMO Net-Zero Framework

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Climate change mitigation; carbon markets; international agreements

India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme

On 1 April the scheme entered the second year of its first compliance cycle. About **490 plants in seven sectors** (aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali, pulp and paper, refining, petrochemicals and textiles) must cut their emission intensity against a 2023-24 baseline. The first compliance date is 31 July 2026.

- The legal basis is the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022; the Bureau of Energy Efficiency runs it and Grid-India is the registry.
- **Critique:** intensity targets let total emissions keep rising; measurement capacity is limited; prices may be too low. The scheme also helps prepare exporters for the EU's carbon border tax (CBAM).

Shipping's net-zero deal delayed again

The IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 84) met in London from **27 April to 1 May** but did not adopt the **Net-Zero Framework**; a vote is now due at MEPC 85 in December 2026.

Target (cut in fuel GHG intensity vs 2008)	2028	2035
Base target	4%	30%
Direct-compliance target	17%	43%

- Ships missing targets would buy 'remedial units' (US$100 or US$380 each), feeding an IMO Net-Zero Fund of an expected US$10-15 billion a year.
- It would be the first global carbon price on a whole industry; for India it affects freight costs and the prospects of green-fuel hubs at Kandla, Tuticorin and Paradip.

Did you know?
Article 6 of the Paris Agreement covers carbon markets; Article 6.4 sets up the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism.

44 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

New Species from the Garo Hills and the Western Ghats

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biodiversity; conservation; taxonomy

Context

The Zoological Survey of India's April 2026 newsletter listed several species new to science or new to India.

Species	Group	Where	Note
Calamaria garoensis	Reed snake	Garo Hills, Meghalaya	New species
Ephemera kodai, *E. kudremukha* and two others	Burrowing mayflies	Western Ghats and south India	New species; mayflies indicate clean water
Psechrus ntu, *P. phenshunyu*	Lace-sheet-weaver spiders	India (as listed)	New species
Lyphira ngankee	Crab	Odisha coast	First record for India
Antepipona bhutanensis	Potter wasp	Kerala	First record for India

- The Garo Hills lie in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot; the Western Ghats form part of the 'Western Ghats and Sri Lanka' hotspot.
- India has too few taxonomists; combining DNA barcoding with physical study, and a digital species register, would help.
- Newly described species are 'Not Evaluated' by the IUCN.

Did you know?
ZSI was founded in 1916 and is based in Kolkata; the Botanical Survey of India dates from 1890.

45 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

April Heatwave: Banda Touches 47.6 C

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; heatwaves. GS1: Climate

Context

Heat built through April over central and north India. On 19 April the highest temperature was **45.0 C** at Rajnandgaon and Wardha, and IMD warned of heatwaves across MP, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, UP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Odisha, Punjab and Haryana. By late April, **Banda (UP) reached 47.6 C** (reported).

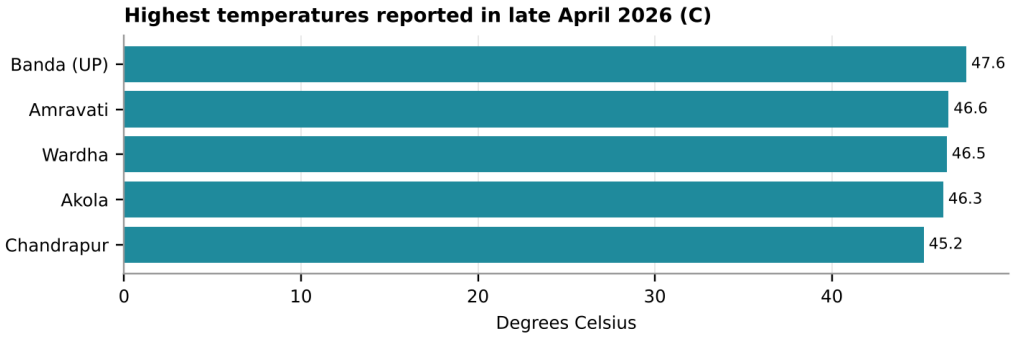


Chart. IMD issued orange alerts for Akola, Amravati and Wardha on 26 April. Source: The Hitavada, 28 April 2026 (reported; check IMD bulletin).

Why interior India heats up

- The sun is nearly overhead before the monsoon; skies are clear and soils dry.
- Hot, dry winds (loo) and sinking air from high-pressure systems block cloud formation.

- The Vidarbha-Bundelkhand belt is far from the sea and gets no moderating moisture.

Key term	Meaning
Heatwave (plains)	Maximum of at least 40 C and 4.5 C above normal, or an actual maximum of 45 C or more
Severe heatwave	6.5 C or more above normal, or a maximum of 47 C or more

Way forward

- Make city and district Heat Action Plans mandatory, and use humid-heat (wet-bulb) measures as well as temperature.
- Cool roofs, shaded work hours, drinking water points and heat-health surveillance.
- Notify heatwaves as a disaster for national relief funds; today States may use up to 10% of their SDRF for local disasters.

46 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Artemis II: Humans Travel Farther Than Ever Before

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; international cooperation in space

Context

NASA's **Artemis II** launched on **1 April 2026** from Kennedy Space Center on the SLS rocket. Its Orion capsule flew around the Moon, and on **6 April** the crew passed the Apollo 13 record for the farthest humans have travelled from Earth. Orion splashed down in the Pacific off San Diego on **10 April**.

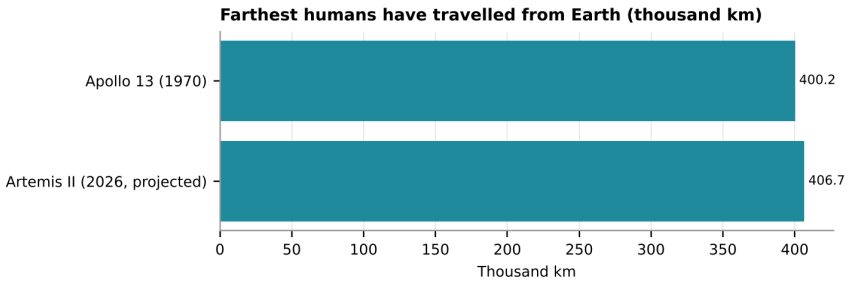


Chart. The Artemis II figure is NASA's projected maximum (about 252,756 miles), not a final measured value. Apollo 13 reached 400,171 km. Source: NASA release, 6 April 2026.

Key Points

- Crew: Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch (NASA) and Jeremy Hansen (Canada), the first non-American to travel around the Moon.
- A flyby, not a landing; closest approach was about 6,545 km above the lunar surface.
- First crewed flight beyond low Earth orbit since Apollo 17 (1972); it tested life support, navigation and the heat shield.

India's stakes

- India signed the Artemis Accords in 2023 and aims for the Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035 and a crewed Moon landing by 2040.
- Capsules, heat shields for lunar-speed re-entry and sea recovery are the same skills India is building through Gaganyaan.
- A new Moon race: China aims to land people by 2030; rules on lunar resources split the Artemis Accords group and the China-Russia lunar station project.

Did you know?

Orion's service module is built by the European Space Agency. The Artemis III landing depends on SpaceX's Starship lander.

47 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

PFBR Goes Critical: India Enters Stage II of Its Nuclear Programme

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Nuclear energy; indigenisation of technology; energy security

Context

The 500 MWe **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, reached **first criticality at 8:25 pm on 6 April 2026**. The Prime Minister called it a defining step; once in commercial operation, India will be only the second country, after Russia, with a commercial fast breeder reactor.

Key Points

- Designed by IGCAR and built and operated by BHAVINI, a public sector unit of the Department of Atomic Energy.
- Fuel: uranium-plutonium mixed oxide (MOX), surrounded by a uranium-238 'blanket'; coolant: liquid sodium.
- It 'breeds' more fissile fuel than it burns: U-238 becomes Pu-239. Later a thorium blanket can make U-233.
- Construction began in 2004; the core was loaded in March 2024. Grid connection has not yet been announced.

Stage	Reactor	Fuel
I	Pressurised heavy water reactors	Natural uranium; produces plutonium
II	Fast breeder reactors (PFBR)	Plutonium; multiplies fissile stock
III	Thorium reactors	Thorium and U-233

Debate

- **Supporters:** a step towards using India's large thorium reserves and the target of 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047.
- **Critics:** the project is over 15 years late; sodium-cooled reactors elsewhere (Monju, Superphenix) had poor records; it is outside IAEA safeguards.

Did you know?

The Fast Breeder Test Reactor at Kalpakkam reached criticality in 1985. India holds about a quarter of the world's thorium, mainly in monazite sands.

48 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Gaganyaan's Parachute Test and ISRO's Launch Pause

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; human spaceflight

IADT-02 (10 April)

ISRO carried out the second **Integrated Air Drop Test** for Gaganyaan off Sriharikota. An IAF Chinook helicopter released a simulated crew module of about **5.7 tonnes** from about 3 km; **ten parachutes of four types** opened in sequence before splashdown and Navy recovery.

- The mass matches the first uncrewed orbital mission, **G1**, which will carry the humanoid robot Vyommitra.
- ISRO, the IAF, the Navy and DRDO took part; DRDO's Aerial Delivery R&D Establishment in Agra makes the parachutes.
- Landing safely is the riskiest part of human spaceflight, so each step must work without failure.

No orbital launch in April (reported)

After PSLV-C61 (May 2025) and PSLV-C62 (January 2026) both failed in the third stage, ISRO made no orbital launch in April. Commentators asked for failure reports to be published and for faster growth of private launchers.

Prelims Pointers

- PSLV has four stages: solid, liquid (Vikas), solid, liquid.
- Gaganyaan aims to carry three crew to about 400 km for up to three days.
- TV-D1 (October 2023) tested the crew escape system.

Breakthrough Prizes 2026: Gene Therapy and the Haemoglobin Switch

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biotechnology; health technology; basic science

Context

The 2026 Breakthrough Prizes, worth US$3 million each, were announced in mid-April.

Field	Winners	For
Life sciences	Jean Bennett, Katherine High, Albert Maguire	The first approved gene therapy for an inherited disease (Luxturna, for a form of blindness)
Life sciences	Stuart Orkin, Swee Lay Thein	How the body switches from foetal to adult haemoglobin; a target for sickle cell and thalassaemia
Life sciences	Rosa Rademakers, Bryan Traynor	The most common genetic cause of ALS and frontotemporal dementia
Physics	Muon g-2 collaborations; special prize to David Gross	Precision tests of the Standard Model; work from the strong force to string theory
Mathematics	Frank Merle	Nonlinear evolution equations

Why it matters for India

- Sickle cell disease is common in tribal communities; the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (2023) aims at 2047.
- The haemoglobin-switch work led to CRISPR therapies, but they cost millions of dollars abroad; India needs local manufacturing and clear CDSCO rules.
- India has its own gene and cell therapy efforts, such as the NexCAR19 CAR-T therapy and a haemophilia gene-therapy trial at CMC Vellore.

50 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

National Quantum Mission: A 1,000 km Secure Link

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Emerging technologies; cyber security

Context

Reviewing the National Quantum Mission on **8 April**, Science Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said a **1,000 km quantum communication network** built with home-grown start-up technology had been demonstrated, against a target of 2,000 km within eight years. He called for transparency and structured evaluation of results. (The demonstration itself may have taken place earlier.)

Key Points

- The mission was approved in 2023 with about Rs 6,003.65 crore for 2023-24 to 2030-31, run by the Department of Science and Technology.
- Four hubs: computing (IISc), communication (IIT Madras with C-DOT), sensing (IIT Bombay) and materials (IIT Delhi).
- Quantum key distribution (QKD) relies on the no-cloning theorem: any eavesdropping disturbs the signal.

Future quantum computers could break today's encryption, so QKD and post-quantum cryptography matter for banks, defence and the power grid. India lags the US and China in qubits and in supply chains such as cryogenics.

Did you know?

China's Micius (2016) was the first quantum communication satellite.

51 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

INS Aridaman: A Third Nuclear Missile Submarine

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; nuclear deterrence

Context

India commissioned **INS Aridaman**, its third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), on **4 April 2026**, under the Advanced Technology Vessel programme.

Submarine	Commissioned	Notes
INS Arihant	2016	First deterrence patrol in 2018
INS Arighaat	2024	Second SSBN
INS Aridaman	2026	About 7,000 tonnes; eight launch tubes, double the earlier boats

- It can carry K-15 (about 700 km) and K-4 (about 3,500 km) missiles.
- Under No First Use, India must be able to survive a first strike and hit back; submarines at sea are the hardest platform to find.
- Three boats bring continuous patrols closer, though four or more are usually needed to cover refits.

Challenges

- K-4's range means patrols close to an adversary; longer-range missiles are still in development.
- Communicating with deep submarines and keeping command and control secure is complex.

Did you know?

India's 2003 nuclear doctrine rests on No First Use and credible minimum deterrence; the Nuclear Command Authority's Political Council is chaired by the Prime Minister.

52 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

INS Taragiri and a Cavitation Tunnel: Building Warships at Home

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Indigenisation of defence technology

Context

On **3 April** the Defence Minister commissioned **INS Taragiri**, the fourth Project 17A stealth frigate, in Visakhapatnam, and laid the foundation of a **Large Cavitation Tunnel** at DRDO's Naval Science and Technological Laboratory.

- Taragiri was built by Mazagon Dock, displaces 6,670 tonnes and has over 75% indigenous content, with parts from more than 200 small firms.
- A cavitation tunnel tests how bubbles form around propellers. Quiet propellers are vital for submarines and anti-submarine warfare, and this testing used to happen abroad.
- The Navy aims to be fully self-reliant by 2047; engines and some weapons are still imported.

Did you know?
Project 17A (Nilgiri class) covers seven frigates built at Mazagon Dock and GRSE, designed by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau.

53 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Record Defence Exports and the Engine Gap

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence industry; self-reliance. GS2: Defence diplomacy

Context

The Defence Ministry reported record exports of **Rs 38,424 crore in 2025-26**, up 62.7% from Rs 23,622 crore. In late April, SIPRI ranked India the world's **fifth-largest military spender** in 2025.

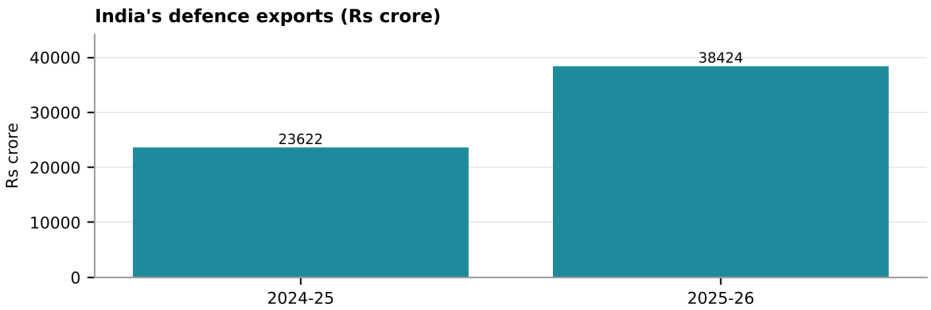


Chart. Defence PSUs earned about 55% and private firms about 45%. The target is Rs 50,000 crore by 2029. Source: Ministry of Defence, as reported by AIR, 2 April 2026.

Strengths and gaps

- Exports bring scale, diplomatic leverage (BrahMos to the Philippines; artillery and radars to Armenia) and links to global supply chains.
- Most growth came from PSUs; private exports grew slowly, and many exports are parts rather than whole platforms.
- **Engines remain the biggest gap:** HAL reportedly penalised GE for late F404 engines for the Tejas Mk-1A, and GE reportedly confirmed a deal to co-produce F414 engines in India (both reported).
- The draft Defence Acquisition Procedure 2026 (February) favours Indian-designed equipment; its final approval was not confirmed in April.

SIPRI: military spending in 2025	Amount
World	US$2,887 billion (+2.9%); 2.5% of world GDP

SIPRI: military spending in 2025	Amount
China (2nd)	US$336 billion
India (5th)	US$92.1 billion (+8.9%)
Pakistan	US$11.9 billion (+11%)

Did you know?
SIPRI is based in Stockholm. Sources differ on whether Germany or Saudi Arabia ranked fourth in 2025.

54 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Theatre Commands: A Three-Theatre Plan (Reported)

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Security forces and their mandate; defence reforms

Context

Press reports in April said the outline of a three-theatre structure had emerged, that the top military leadership held a brainstorming called **'Ran Samwad'** on multi-domain operations (9-10 April), and that the Chief of Defence Staff submitted a formal proposal around 26 April. **All of this is reported, not officially confirmed.**

Theatre (reported)	Faces	Lead service
Western	Pakistan	Air Force
Northern	China	Army
Maritime	Indian Ocean	Navy

Why theatre commands

- The Kargil Review Committee (1999) and the Shekatkar Committee (2016) pointed to weak joint working.
- The CDS post and the Department of Military Affairs (2019-20) were created partly to bring in theatres.
- Operation Sindoor (May 2025) showed that modern wars need close tri-service coordination.

Challenges

- Concern in the Air Force about splitting scarce fighter squadrons.
- Who commands whom when theatre commanders equal service chiefs in rank.
- Integrating logistics and communications.

Did you know?
India's existing tri-service commands are the Andaman and Nicobar Command (2001) and the Strategic Forces Command (2003).

55 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Pahalgam, One Year On

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Terrorism; security challenges in border areas

Context

On **22 April 2026** the country marked one year since the terror attack at Baisaran near Pahalgam, in which 26 people were killed. The Prime Minister said the victims 'will never be forgotten', and the Army said: 'For acts against India, the response is assured.'

- The attack was attributed to Lashkar-e-Taiba through its proxy, The Resistance Front.
- India responded with Operation Sindoor on 7 May 2025, striking targets in Pakistan and PoK.
- J&K introduced background checks and **QR-code identity cards** for pony operators, vendors and other tourism workers.

Challenges

- Infiltration into the Jammu region and networks of local supporters (overground workers).
- Balancing tighter checks with the livelihoods of local service providers.
- Escalation risks between nuclear-armed neighbours.

Did you know?
Pahalgam is in Anantnag district on the Lidder river. The Resistance Front was declared a terrorist organisation under UAPA in 2023.

56 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

After the 31 March Deadline: Holding the Gains Against Naxalism

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Left Wing Extremism; development and security

Context

The Home Minister told Parliament on 30 March that India had become 'Naxal-free' and that the Maoist leadership had been almost completely dismantled. Government publications in April presented 31 March 2026 as the date. Security forces are expected to remain in Bastar for some time to prevent regrouping.

What next

- **Development:** roads, mobile towers, banks, schools and health care in the former 'Red Corridor'.
- **Rights:** forest rights, PESA and fair compensation for land taken for mining.
- **Rehabilitation:** jobs and training for surrendered cadres.
- **Accountability:** independent inquiry into allegations of fake encounters.

Peace is more than the absence of violence; the grievances that fed the movement, such as land alienation and displacement, must be addressed for the gains to last.

Did you know?
Naxalism began at Naxalbari, West Bengal, in 1967. The National Policy and Action Plan on LWE dates from 2015, and the SAMADHAN strategy from 2017.

57 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

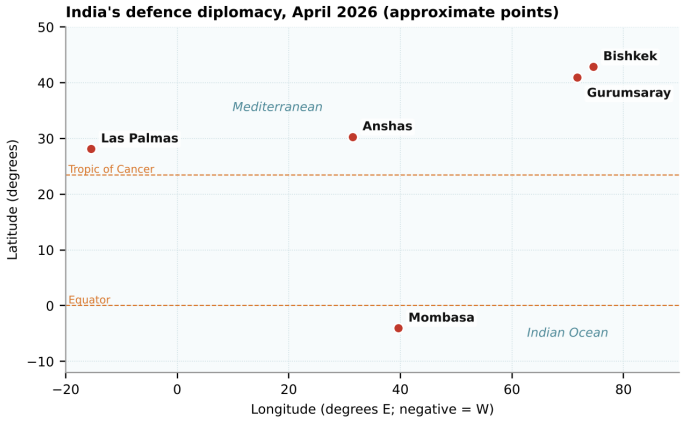
Defence Diplomacy: SCO in Bishkek, Dustlik and Cyclone

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Security cooperation. GS2: Regional groupings

Context

April brought a busy month of military diplomacy.

Event	Where and when	Details
SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 28 April	Rajnath Singh stressed 'zero tolerance for terrorism'
Exercise Dustlik-VII (Uzbekistan)	Gurumsaray, Namangan, mid-April to 25 April	60 Indian personnel (Mahar Regiment and IAF); semi-mountain operations
Exercise Cyclone-IV (Egypt)	Anshas, Egypt, 9-17 April	Special forces; desert operations
INS Trikand	Mombasa, Kenya (from 7 April)	Passage exercise with the Kenya Navy (reported)
INS Sudarshini (Lokayan 26)	Las Palmas, Canary Islands, 24 April	First visit there (reported)



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

- Central Asia matters for connectivity and counter-terrorism, especially given Afghanistan.
- Egypt is a gateway to West Asia and Africa and a possible buyer of Indian weapons.
- In 2025 India refused to sign the SCO defence ministers' statement because it left out Pahalgam; consensus on terrorism remains hard with China and Pakistan at the table.

Did you know?

'Dustlik' means friendship in Uzbek. Uzbekistan is one of only two doubly landlocked countries; the other is Liechtenstein.

58 | ETHICS GS 4

Case Study: The Afternoon Shift

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics in public administration; compassion; duty of care; conflict of interest

The case

You are the District Collector of a district on the Deccan plateau. IMD has issued an orange alert: temperatures will touch 46 C for the next five days. A state highway project and three large housing projects are behind schedule, and contractors say that stopping work between noon and 4 pm will cost them penalties. Construction workers, many of them migrants paid daily, tell your officers that they cannot afford to lose wages. Two workers collapsed last week; one died, but the hospital recorded the cause as 'cardiac arrest'. A local MLA, whose relative holds one of the contracts, has called you to 'be practical'.

Stakeholders

- Workers and their families, who face both heat risk and wage loss.
- Contractors and the public, who want projects finished on time.
- The health system, which must treat and honestly record heat illness.
- You, as the officer accountable for lives under the Disaster Management Act.

Ethical issues

- **Right to life versus livelihood:** a policy that protects health but costs wages pushes the burden onto the poorest.
- **Duty of care:** the State and employers owe care to people who cannot protect themselves.
- **Honesty in records:** under-reporting heat deaths hides the problem and denies compensation.
- **Integrity:** political pressure linked to a relative's contract is a conflict of interest.

Option	Merits	Demerits
Do nothing; leave it to contractors	No disruption to projects	Further deaths are likely; abdication of duty
Ban all outdoor work for five days	Protects health	Workers lose wages; contractors may defy the order
Shift working hours, with shade, water, rest and wage protection; set up heat units and honest reporting	Protects life and income; legally defensible	Needs monitoring and firmness under pressure

A reasoned course of action

Choose the third option. Issue an order under the Disaster Management Act moving outdoor work to early morning and evening, and require shade, drinking water, ORS and rest breaks at sites. Ask the government to extend deadlines without penalty during the alert, so that contractors do not cut wages. Use district funds or labour welfare boards to protect daily wages for lost hours. Direct hospitals to activate heatstroke units and to record heat illness accurately, and order an inquiry into last week's death. Reply to the MLA politely but in writing, and record the conflict of interest. Inform the public through local media.

Ethics vocabulary to use

- **Rawls' difference principle:** arrangements should benefit the least advantaged.
- **Duty of care:** a responsibility to prevent foreseeable harm.
- **Courage of conviction:** doing what is right under pressure.

59 | ETHICS GS 4

Ethics in the News: Values Behind April's Headlines

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics and human interface; ethics in governance and international relations

Why read the news for ethics

These links between April's stories and ethical ideas give ready examples for GS Paper IV. For each, practise a paragraph that names the value, gives the example and balances it against a competing value.

Story	Ethical question	Concepts to use
Evacuating seafarers and students	How far does a State's duty of care to citizens abroad extend?	Duty of care; responsibility; solidarity
Women's reservation Bill	Should justice for one group wait for agreement on another issue?	Justice; fairness; deliberation
Voter roll appeals	Is a clean roll worth the risk of excluding eligible voters?	Fairness; due process; inclusion
Judge resigning mid-inquiry	Does accountability end when office ends?	Accountability; transparency; trust
Sabarimala reference	Can faith and equality be reconciled?	Tolerance; dignity; constitutional morality
Heatwave and workers	Who carries the cost of protecting health?	Compassion; justice; empathy
Famine in Gaza and Sudan	Is starving civilians ever acceptable in war?	Human dignity; just war; humanitarianism
Jan Vishwas 2.0	Can the State trust citizens more without weakening deterrence?	Trust; proportionality; rule of law

Thinkers to quote

- **B.R. Ambedkar:** 'constitutional morality' is not natural; it must be cultivated. Use for elections, institutions and religious reform.
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** the talisman of the poorest person. Use for heat, hunger and welfare.
- **Rabindranath Tagore:** returning his knighthood after Jallianwala Bagh as an act of conscience. Use for courage and integrity.
- **Amartya Sen:** famines are failures of entitlement, not just of food supply. Use for GRFC and food security.

60 | ESSAY ESSAY

Essay Corner: Themes from This Month

Three essay themes from April's news, with a sample outline. Write one practice essay (1,000-1,200 words) this week.

Themes to practise

- **Representation delayed is representation denied.** Women's quota, delimitation and federal fairness.
- **The heat is a mirror of inequality.** Climate change and the people who cannot stay indoors.
- **Memory is the conscience of a nation.** Jallianwala Bagh, Ambedkar and what we choose to remember.

Sample outline: 'The heat is a mirror of inequality'

- **Opening:** a construction worker in Banda at 47 C, and an office worker in an air-conditioned room in the same town.
- **Scientific dimension:** warming oceans, El Nino and more frequent heatwaves.
- **Economic dimension:** lost work hours, lower productivity, record power demand.
- **Social dimension:** informal workers, women cooking in hot kitchens, the elderly and slum residents.
- **Governance dimension:** heat action plans, heatstroke units, honest death counts, notifying heat as a disaster.
- **Global dimension:** responsibility of high emitters; adaptation finance.
- **Counter-view:** India must still build and grow; the answer is smarter growth, not halting work.
- **Conclusion:** how a society shares the burden of heat shows how fair it is.

Did you know?

Use examples from different fields and regions. Keep a notebook of examples from each month's magazine, grouped by theme.

61 | HISTORY PRELIMS

History, Art and Culture: Quick Notes

Anniversaries, heritage and people from April 2026.

Anniversaries

- **Jallianwala Bagh (13 April 1919):** 107th anniversary; Hunter Committee set up in 1919; Udham Singh shot Michael O'Dwyer in 1940.
- **Ambedkar Jayanti (14 April):** 135th birth anniversary; born at Mhow in 1891; declared a public holiday.

Heritage and people

- **World Heritage Day (18 April):** theme 'Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters' (ICOMOS).
- **Asha Bhosle** died on 12 April, aged 92; Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2000), Padma Vibhushan (2008); state funeral at Shivaji Park.
- **Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics 2026:** Frank Merle.

62 | ART AND CULTURE PRELIMS

Sports: Quick Notes

Results of Prelims value from April 2026.

Chess

- **FIDE Candidates 2026** ended on 15 April at Cap St Georges, Cyprus.
- **Open:** Javokhir Sindarov (Uzbekistan), 9.5/13, unbeaten; he will challenge world champion D. Gukesh.
- **Women's:** R. Vaishali (India), 8.5/14; she will challenge Ju Wenjun (China).

63 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Geography: Phenomena in the News

Concepts behind April's geography stories.

Monsoon and ENSO

- **IMD forecast (13 April):** 92% of LPA (plus or minus 5%); LPA (1971-2020) is 87 cm; 'below normal' is 90-95%.
- **NOAA (9 April):** 'El Nino Watch'; 61% chance of El Nino in May-July.
- **Positive IOD:** warmer western Indian Ocean; usually helps the Indian monsoon.
- **Snow cover:** more Eurasian snow in winter-spring usually weakens the monsoon.

Earth processes

- **Japan Trench:** the Pacific Plate subducts under the Okhotsk microplate.
- **Molucca Sea:** the world's only active arc-arc collision.
- **Stratovolcano vs shield volcano:** Sakurajima (explosive, subduction) and Kilauea (effusive, hotspot).
- **USGS:** eight M6+ quakes worldwide in April 2026, all around the Pacific.

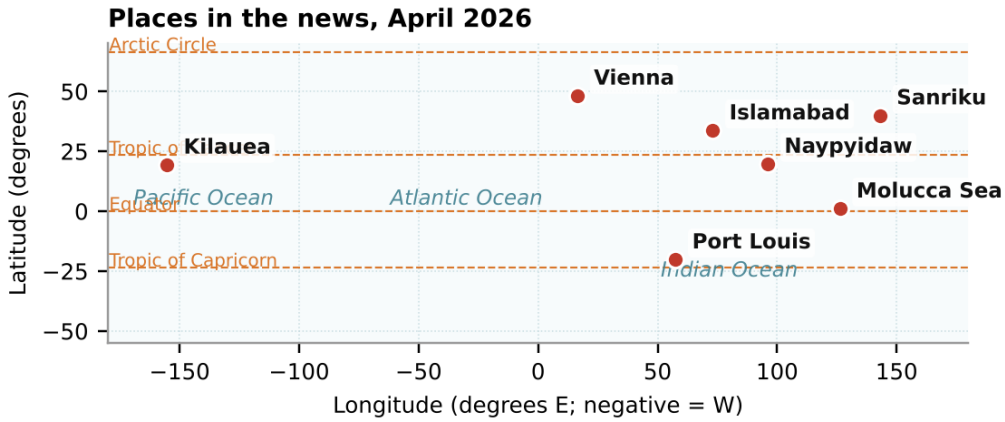
Weather

- No depression or cyclone formed over the North Indian Ocean in April 2026.
- **Loo:** hot, dry westerly winds over the north-west plains in May-June.
- **Western disturbances:** extra-tropical storms carried by the subtropical westerly jet.

64 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Places in the News: April 2026 on the Map

Locate each place and learn one fact about it.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Red dots mark the places; dashed lines mark the Tropics, the Equator and the Arctic Circle.

Asia

- **Islamabad:** venue of failed US-Iran talks (11-12 April).
- **Bishkek:** capital of Kyrgyzstan; SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting (28 April).
- **Naypyidaw:** capital of Myanmar; Min Aung Hlaing elected President.
- **Kabul:** spring floods across Afghanistan killed 77.
- **Molucca Sea:** between Sulawesi and Halmahera; M7.4 quake on 1-2 April.
- **Sanriku coast:** Iwate, Japan; M7.4 quake and 79 cm tsunami at Kuji on 20 April.

Elsewhere

- **Port Louis:** capital of Mauritius; 9th Indian Ocean Conference.
- **Vienna:** capital of Austria; Chancellor Stocker visited India.
- **Cyprus:** FIDE Candidates tournaments.
- **Kilauea:** shield volcano on Hawaii's Big Island; lava fountain episodes.

65 | POLITY — PRELIMS

Polity and Governance: Quick Notes

Laws, cases and institutions in the news in April 2026.

Parliament

- **131st Amendment Bill:** introduced 16 April; failed 17 April (298 for, 230 against; 352 needed). Proposed a Lok Sabha of up to 850.
- **Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026:** 79 Acts, 23 Ministries, 717 of 784 provisions decriminalised.
- **CAPF (General Administration) Bill:** 50% of IG posts and at least 67% of ADG posts by deputation.
- **AP Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill:** Amaravati the statutory sole capital.

Courts and elections

- **Sabarimala reference:** nine-judge bench from 7 April, led by CJI Surya Kant.
- **West Bengal SIR:** roll cut from 7.66 crore to 7.04 crore; 'pendency of appeal is not a right to vote' (24 April).
- **Supreme Court pendency:** about 92,823 cases (end of April); the M.C. Mehta petition of 1984 closed.
- **Turnouts:** West Bengal 92.47%, Puducherry 89.87%, Assam 85.64%.
- **Census 2027:** houselisting from 1 April; first self-enumeration.

66 | SOCIAL JUSTICE — PRELIMS

Society, Health and Welfare: Quick Notes

Schemes, days and reports from April 2026.

Health and nutrition

- **World Health Day (7 April):** 'Together for Health. Stand with Science'.
- **World Malaria Day (25 April):** 'Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must.'; India targets zero indigenous cases by 2027.
- **8th Poshan Pakhwada:** 9-23 April; brain development in the first six years.
- **Heatstroke units:** Health Ministry asked all facilities to set them up and report on IHIP (28 April).

Reports

- **GRFC 2026 (24 April):** 266 million in acute food insecurity; famine confirmed in Gaza and parts of Sudan.
- **PLFS (March data):** unemployment 5.1%; urban 6.8%; female LFPR 34.4%.
- **SIPRI:** India fifth-largest military spender in 2025 (US$92.1 billion).

67 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS

International Relations: Quick Notes

Places, groupings and agreements in the news in April 2026.

West Asia

- **US-Iran ceasefire:** 8 April, mediated by Pakistan; extended indefinitely on 21 April; US naval blockade from 13 April.
- **Evacuation:** 1,777 Indians left Iran, mostly via Armenia; 433 Indian seafarers on 16 Indian ships remained in the Gulf (6 April).

Neighbourhood and beyond

- **9th Indian Ocean Conference:** Port Louis, 10-12 April; first in Africa; organised by the India Foundation.
- **Bangladesh:** FM Khalilur Rahman in Delhi (7-9 April); the Ganga Water Treaty (1996) expires in December 2026.
- **Myanmar:** Min Aung Hlaing elected President (429 of 584 votes).
- **Austria:** Chancellor Stocker's visit, the first since 1984; Working Holiday Programme.
- **India-US:** trade talks in Washington, 20-22 April; US Section 122 tariff of 10% for 150 days.
- **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2026:** announced at the end of April for June-August, via Lipulekh and Nathu La (1,000 pilgrims).

68 | ECONOMY PRELIMS

Economy: Quick Notes

Rates, indicators and laws from April 2026.

Monetary and prices

- **Repo rate:** 5.25% (8 April); SDF 5.00%; MSF 5.50%; stance neutral.
- **RBI 2026-27 projections:** GDP 6.9%; CPI 4.6%.
- **March CPI:** 3.40% (base 2024=100); **WPI:** 3.9%, a 38-month high.

Trade, tax and output

- **Exports 2025-26:** record US$860.09 billion; trade deficit US$119.30 billion.
- **GST 2025-26:** gross Rs 22.27 lakh crore (+8.3%).
- **Income-tax Act, 2025:** in force from 1 April 2026; single 'tax year'; Form 130 replaces Form 16.
- **IIP:** 4.1% in March and 4.1% in 2025-26; capital goods +14.6% in March.
- **UPI:** ten years old on 11 April.

Agriculture, energy and infrastructure

- **NBS Kharif 2026:** Rs 41,534 crore; wheat procurement target raised to 34.5 million tonnes; MSP Rs 2,585 a quintal.
- **Peak power:** 256.1 GW on 25 April; **solar:** 150.26 GW cumulative.
- **Major ports:** 915.17 million tonnes in 2025-26.
- **Arunachal hydro:** Kalai-II (1,200 MW, Lohit basin) and Kamala (1,720 MW).
- **LPG imports** fell about 16% in April because of Hormuz disruption (reported).

69 | ENVIRONMENT PRELIMS

Environment and Ecology: Quick Notes

Rules, reports and species from April 2026.

Rules and markets

- **Draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026:** 3 April; under the EP Act, 1986; tar-balls treated as hazardous waste.
- **PWM (Amendment) Rules, 2026:** notified 31 March; Category I recycled content 30% rising to 60% by 2028-29.
- **CCTS:** about 490 entities in seven sectors; first compliance date 31 July 2026.
- **IMO MEPC 84:** London, 27 April-1 May; Net-Zero Framework vote deferred to December 2026.

Climate and species

- **Copernicus:** April 2026 was 1.43 C above pre-industrial, joint third-warmest April.
- **Earth Day (22 April):** 'Our Power, Our Planet'.
- **Calamaria garoensis:** new reed snake, Garo Hills, Meghalaya.
- **Ephemera kudremukha, E. kodai:** new mayflies from the Western Ghats region.

70 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRELIMS

Science and Technology: Quick Notes

Missions, reactors and prizes from April 2026.

Space

- **Artemis II:** launched 1 April; passed Apollo 13's record (400,171 km) on 6 April; splashdown 10 April off San Diego.
- **Crew:** Wiseman, Glover, Koch (NASA) and Hansen (Canada).
- **Gaganyaan IADT-02:** 10 April; 5.7-tonne module, ten parachutes, IAF Chinook.

Nuclear, quantum and biotech

- **PFBR, Kalpakkam:** first criticality 6 April; 500 MWe; MOX fuel; sodium coolant; BHAVINI and IGCAR.
- **National Quantum Mission:** 1,000 km quantum communication network; target 2,000 km.
- **Breakthrough Prize:** gene therapy (Luxturna) and the foetal-to-adult haemoglobin switch.

71 | INTERNAL SECURITY PRELIMS

Defence and Security: Quick Notes

Platforms, exercises and reforms from April 2026.

Platforms and industry

- **INS Aridaman:** third SSBN, commissioned 4 April; about 7,000 tonnes.
- **INS Taragiri:** fourth Project 17A frigate, commissioned 3 April at Visakhapatnam.
- **Defence exports 2025-26:** Rs 38,424 crore (+62.7%).

Exercises and reforms

- **Dustlik-VII:** India-Uzbekistan; Gurumsaray, Namangan.
- **Cyclone-IV:** India-Egypt special forces; Anshas, 9-17 April.
- **Theatre commands:** three-theatre proposal reportedly submitted by the CDS (reported).
- **Pahalgam anniversary (22 April):** QR-code IDs for tourism workers in J&K.

72 | REVISION REVISION

Days and Themes of April 2026

Important days observed in April, with their 2026 themes.

Days with themes

- **World Health Day (7 April):** 'Together for Health. Stand with Science'; marks WHO's founding in 1948.
- **World Heritage Day (18 April):** 'Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters'.
- **Earth Day (22 April):** 'Our Power, Our Planet'; the 56th Earth Day.
- **World Malaria Day (25 April):** 'Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must.'

Anniversaries and events

- **11 April:** UPI turns ten.
- **13 April:** 107th anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh.
- **14 April:** Ambedkar's 135th birth anniversary.
- **22 April:** first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack.
- **9-23 April:** 8th Poshan Pakhwada.

Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains

1. The Hunter Committee was set up to inquire into:

(a) the Chauri Chaura incident (b) the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Punjab disturbances (c) the Moplah rebellion (d) the Kakori conspiracy

Answer: (b). It was officially the Disorders Inquiry Committee (1919).

2. Who returned his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre?

(a) Mahatma Gandhi (b) Rabindranath Tagore (c) Jamnalal Bajaj (d) Motilal Nehru

Answer: (b). Gandhi returned his Kaisar-i-Hind medal.

3. The Mahad Satyagraha (1927) led by Dr Ambedkar was about:

(a) temple entry (b) access to a public water tank (c) separate electorates (d) land rights

Answer: (b). It asserted the right of Dalits to use the Chavdar tank.

4. Which of the following is NOT one of Ambedkar's Panchteerth?

(a) Mhow (b) Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur (c) Sabarmati (d) Chaitya Bhoomi, Mumbai

Answer: (c). The others are London and the Mahaparinirvan Sthal in Delhi.

5. World Heritage Day (18 April) was proposed by:

(a) UNESCO (b) ICOMOS (c) ICCROM (d) the World Monuments Fund

Answer: (b). UNESCO endorsed it in 1983.

6. R. Vaishali won the 2026 Women's Candidates and will challenge:

(a) Hou Yifan (b) Ju Wenjun (c) Aleksandra Goryachkina (d) Koneru Humpy

Answer: (b). Ju Wenjun of China is the women's world champion.

7. In IMD's classification, a 'below normal' monsoon is rainfall of:

(a) less than 90% of LPA (b) 90-95% of LPA (c) 96-104% of LPA (d) 105-110% of LPA

Answer: (b). IMD forecast 92% of LPA for 2026.

8. The Long Period Average of India's south-west monsoon rainfall (1971-2020) is about:

(a) 80 cm (b) 87 cm (c) 89 cm (d) 117 cm

Answer: (b). The LPA was updated from 88 cm to 87 cm.

9. A positive Indian Ocean Dipole means:

(a) a warmer eastern Indian Ocean (b) a warmer western Indian Ocean (c) a cooler Arabian Sea (d) stronger La Nina

Answer: (b). A positive IOD usually helps the Indian monsoon.

10. The Molucca Sea, where an M7.4 quake struck in April, is notable because it is:

(a) a mid-ocean ridge (b) a hotspot (c) an active arc-arc collision zone (d) a transform fault

Answer: (c). A small plate is being subducted on both sides.

11. Kilauea is an example of a:

(a) stratovolcano over a subduction zone (b) shield volcano over a hotspot (c) caldera at a rift (d) cinder cone

Answer: (b). Its runny basalt produces lava fountains.

12. Consider: 1. Census is in the Union List. 2. Census 2027 is the first in which households could self-enumerate. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Answer: (c). Census is Entry 69 of the Union List.

13. Under PLFS, 'current weekly status' uses a reference period of:

(a) 1 day (b) 7 days (c) 30 days (d) 365 days

Answer: (b). Usual status uses 365 days.

14. A constitutional amendment under Article 368(2) needs:

(a) a simple majority (b) two-thirds of total membership (c) a majority of total membership and two-thirds of members present and voting (d) three-fourths of members present

Answer: (c). The 131st Amendment Bill fell 54 votes short.

15. Articles 330A and 332A, on women's reservation, were inserted by the:

(a) 104th Amendment (b) 105th Amendment (c) 106th Amendment (d) 108th Amendment

Answer: (c). The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023.

16. Which article deals with the superintendence, direction and control of elections?

(a) Article 320 (b) Article 324 (c) Article 326 (d) Article 329

Answer: (b). Article 326 provides for adult suffrage.

17. The 'essential religious practices' test originated in:

(a) Shirur Mutt (1954) (b) Kesavananda Bharati (1973) (c) S.R. Bommai (1994) (d) Shayara Bano (2017)

Answer: (a). The Sabarimala reference may reshape this test.

18. The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 decriminalises provisions in how many Central Acts?

(a) 42 (b) 63 (c) 79 (d) 183

Answer: (c). The 2023 Act covered 42 Acts.

19. A motion to remove a Supreme Court judge can be initiated with the signatures of:

(a) 50 Lok Sabha members (b) 100 Lok Sabha or 50 Rajya Sabha members (c) 100 members of either House (d) one-tenth of each House

Answer: (b). Under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

20. The Indian Ocean Conference 2026 was held in:

(a) Colombo (b) Male (c) Port Louis (d) Muscat

Answer: (c). It was the first held in Africa.

21. The Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh was signed in:

(a) 1977 (b) 1985 (c) 1996 (d) 2011

Answer: (c). It covers sharing at Farakka for 30 years.

22. Section 122 of the US Trade Act, used for a temporary tariff in 2026, allows surcharges for up to:

(a) 90 days (b) 120 days (c) 150 days (d) one year

Answer: (c). The surcharge cannot exceed 15%; 10% was applied.

23. The headquarters of the IAEA, UNIDO and OPEC are in:

(a) Geneva (b) Vienna (c) Paris (d) Brussels

Answer: (b). Austria's Chancellor visited India in April.

24. The Global Report on Food Crises 2026 confirmed famine in:

(a) Yemen and Haiti (b) Gaza Governorate and parts of Sudan (c) Afghanistan and Somalia (d) South Sudan and Mali

Answer: (b). The first time two famines were confirmed in one year.

25. POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched in 2018 at:

(a) Ballia (b) Jhunjhunu (c) Shahdol (d) Panipat

Answer: (b). Ujjwala was launched at Ballia; the sickle cell mission at Shahdol.

26. Which of the following malaria vaccines is made by the Serum Institute of India?

(a) RTS,S (b) R21/Matrix-M (c) Mosquirix (d) PfSPZ

Answer: (b). RTS,S is sold as Mosquirix.

27. After the April 2026 policy, the Standing Deposit Facility rate is:

(a) 4.75% (b) 5.00% (c) 5.25% (d) 5.50%

Answer: (b). SDF is the floor of the corridor; MSF the ceiling.

28. Which body compiles the Wholesale Price Index?

(a) NSO (b) RBI (c) Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT (d) Labour Bureau

Answer: (c). CPI is compiled by the NSO.

29. India's total exports of goods and services in 2025-26 were about:

(a) US$560 billion (b) US$760 billion (c) US$860 billion (d) US$1 trillion

Answer: (c). Services exports were about US$418 billion.

30. Under the Income-tax Act, 2025, the TDS certificate Form 16 is replaced by:

(a) Form 26AS (b) Form 130 (c) Form 12BB (d) Form 1

Answer: (b). A single 'tax year' replaces previous year and assessment year.

31. The Nutrient Based Subsidy scheme does NOT cover:
(a) DAP (b) MOP (c) urea (d) NPK complexes
Answer: (c). Urea has a statutory fixed price.

32. Kalai-II hydro project, approved in April, is in which river basin?
(a) Siang (b) Lohit (c) Subansiri (d) Kameng
Answer: (b). Kamala is in the Subansiri basin.

33. Which is India's largest major port by cargo in 2025-26?
(a) JNPA (b) Paradip (c) Deendayal (Kandla) (d) Visakhapatnam
Answer: (c). Paradip and JNPA followed.

34. Tar-balls, covered by draft rules in April, are mainly:
(a) plastic pellets (b) weathered lumps of oil (c) coal dust (d) algal mats
Answer: (b). They wash up on the west coast in the monsoon.

35. India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme is based on the:
(a) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (b) Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022 (c) Electricity Act, 2003 (d) Air Act, 1981
Answer: (b). The Bureau of Energy Efficiency administers it.

36. The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor uses which coolant?
(a) heavy water (b) light water (c) liquid sodium (d) helium
Answer: (c). Its fuel is uranium-plutonium mixed oxide.

37. In India's three-stage nuclear programme, thorium is used mainly in:
(a) Stage I (b) Stage II (c) Stage III (d) all stages equally
Answer: (c). Thorium-232 is converted into fissile U-233.

38. Which astronaut on Artemis II was from Canada?
(a) Victor Glover (b) Jeremy Hansen (c) Reid Wiseman (d) Christina Koch
Answer: (b). He became the first non-American to fly around the Moon.

39. INS Aridaman, commissioned in April 2026, is a:
(a) diesel-electric attack submarine (b) nuclear ballistic missile submarine (c) stealth frigate (d) aircraft carrier
Answer: (b). It is India's third SSBN.

40. Exercise Dustlik is held between India and:
(a) Kazakhstan (b) Kyrgyzstan (c) Uzbekistan (d) Tajikistan
Answer: (c). The 2026 edition was at Gurumsaray, Namangan.

41. Exercise Cyclone is held between India and:
(a) Egypt (b) Oman (c) Saudi Arabia (d) Morocco
Answer: (a). The fourth edition was at Anshas, Egypt.

Mains Practice

- **Q1.** How did the Jallianwala Bagh massacre change the course of the Indian national movement? (GS I, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q2.** Ambedkar saw education as the key to dignity. Examine the challenges of caste discrimination in Indian higher education. (GS I/II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q3.** Explain how El Nino and the Indian Ocean Dipole influence the Indian monsoon. What should be the response to a below-normal forecast? (GS I, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q4.** Why are subduction zones prone to great earthquakes and tsunamis? Discuss with recent examples. (GS I, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q5.** Census 2027 will be India's first digital census. Discuss its opportunities and concerns. (GS I/II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q6.** Female labour force participation in India remains low and volatile. Examine the reasons and suggest measures. (GS I, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q7.** The 2026 US-Iran ceasefire exposed India's vulnerabilities in West Asia. Examine India's interests and options. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q8.** Evaluate the role of the Indian Ocean Conference and MAHASAGAR in India's maritime diplomacy. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)

- **Q9.** India-Bangladesh relations need an issue-based reset. Discuss with reference to water, energy and security. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q10.** Should the women's reservation be delinked from delimitation? Critically examine. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q11.** High voter turnout does not necessarily mean a healthier democracy. Discuss with reference to roll revisions. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q12.** The Sabarimala reference asks how courts should balance religious freedom with equality. Discuss. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q13.** Decriminalisation of minor offences supports trust-based governance but has limits. Discuss with reference to Jan Vishwas 2.0. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q14.** Should a judge's resignation end an inquiry into misconduct? Suggest reforms to the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q15.** The One Health approach is essential for India. Discuss. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q16.** Conflict is now the main driver of global hunger. Discuss with reference to the Global Report on Food Crises 2026. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q17.** How should monetary policy respond to an imported oil shock? Discuss with reference to the RBI's April 2026 policy. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q18.** India's exports are increasingly driven by services. Examine the implications for the external sector. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q19.** Assess the significance of the Income-tax Act, 2025 for tax administration. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q20.** Relaxing quality norms in procurement helps farmers but creates other costs. Discuss with reference to the 2026 wheat harvest. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q21.** Record solar additions have not removed India's evening peak problem. Discuss. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q22.** Large hydropower in Arunachal Pradesh brings strategic and developmental gains, but also risks. Examine. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q23.** Assess India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme as a tool for decarbonisation. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q24.** Heatwaves should be treated as a notified disaster. Do you agree? (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q25.** Explain the significance of the PFBR for India's three-stage nuclear programme. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q26.** What lessons does Artemis II hold for India's human spaceflight programme? (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q27.** Discuss the significance of a sea-based nuclear deterrent for India. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q28.** Theatre commands are essential for future wars, but integration is not easy. Discuss. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q29.** 'Protecting health should not mean punishing the poor.' Discuss in the context of heat-related work restrictions. (GS IV, 10 marks, 150 words)

Official Sources to Bookmark

Scan or click to open the official sites used most for monthly current affairs.

Press Information Bureau
https://pib.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Reserve Bank of India
https://www.rbi.org.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

PRS Legislative Research
https://prsindia.org
Scan or click to open the official source.

India Meteorological Department
https://mausam.imd.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Ministry of External Affairs
https://www.mea.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Sources and Notes

- **History and culture:** All India Radio (Jallianwala Bagh, 13 April; Asha Bhosle, 12 April); The Tribune; Goa DIP and StudyCafe (Ambedkar Jayanti); ICOMOS (World Heritage Day); FIDE, The Bridge and IANS (Candidates); The Quint and ETV Bharat.
- **Geography:** IMD long range forecast (13 April) and press release (19 April); NOAA CPC ENSO discussion (9 April); USGS earthquake catalogue; Intellinews and Wikipedia (Sanriku); AP via news4jax (Molucca Sea); CP24 and USGS (volcanoes); AP via Jamaica Gleaner (Afghanistan); The Hitavada (28 April) and AIR (26 April) on temperatures.
- **Society and social justice:** AIR (Census, 1, 10 and 22 April); ETV Bharat and Deccan Herald; MoSPI PLFS bulletin (15 April); WHO SEARO and Drishti IAS (World Health Day, Malaria Day, Poshan Pakhwada); MoHFW DO letter (23 April) and AIR (28 April); UNRIC and EU ECHO (GRFC); Drishti and IASGyan (SIPRI); The Leaflet and Free Press Journal (UGC regulations).
- **International relations:** AIR and IANS (ceasefire, 8 April; seafarers, 6 April); Wikipedia (ceasefire timeline); WION and CFR; Times of Oman and Enterprise AM (Gulf visits); Vajiram and AIR (Indian Ocean Conference, Austria); ORF and Asia News Network (Bangladesh); AIR (US trade, 20 April); The Hitavada (Myanmar); The Tribune (Kailash Mansarovar Yatra).
- **Polity:** SCC Online, Vision IAS, Drishti IAS and The Hitavada (131st Amendment); The Hitavada, WION, Organiser and The Wire (turnouts); AIR (24 April), SCC Online and Newslaundry (SIR); Bar & Bench (Sabarimala); AIR (Jan Vishwas, CAPF, Amaravati); SC Observer monthly review for April 2026.
- **Economy:** Kotak MF note and Drishti IAS (RBI); PIB/MoSPI CPI release (13 April); ICRA (WPI); MoSPI IIP release (28 April); IASGyan, WION and Superkalam (IMF); AIR (World Bank); ADB release (10 April); KNN India and AIR (trade); Business Today and IANS (GST); Drishti IAS and TaxGuru (Income-tax Act); IANS and Outlook Money (UPI); AIR (forex, 10 April).
- **Agriculture, energy and infrastructure:** ETV Bharat (NBS); Business Standard and AIR (wheat); Renewable Watch and SolarQuarter (peak demand); pv magazine and JMK Research (solar); AIR and Indian Infrastructure (hydro, rail); Coal Ministry and Mysteel (coal); AIR and IANS (ports); PM India (Jaipur Metro); EaseMyPrep and S&P Global (LPG).
- **Environment:** TeamLease RegTech and Mongabay (tar-balls); Corporate Professionals and Vision IAS (plastic rules); Copernicus C3S; EARTHDAY.ORG; Carbon Brief and Lloyd's Register (MEPC 84); ICAP (CCTS); ZSI e-newsletter April 2026.
- **Science and security:** NASA (Artemis II, 6 April); DAE and ANS (PFBR); ISRO (IADT-02, 10 April); NAS and VIR (Breakthrough Prizes); AIR (Quantum Mission, 8 April); Drishti IAS and ETV Bharat (INS Aridaman); AIR and DRDO press clippings (Taragiri, theatre commands, exercises); AIR (defence exports, 2 April); Business Standard (Pahalgam anniversary); New India Samachar (LWE); Drishti IAS (Dustlik).

Please verify before use

- **Facts are as reported up to 30 April 2026.** Election results (4 May), the Sabarimala verdict (reserved in May), MEPC 84's last day (1 May) and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra announcement (30 April or 1 May) fall at or after the month's end.
- **Reported, not confirmed from primary documents:** Justice Varma's resignation (single source); theatre command details; HAL penalties on GE and the F414 deal; Banda's 47.6 C reading; Hormuz ship counts and tolls; the interim trade deal status; LPG import fall; total coal output; UPI's March value; malaria statistics; Poshan Pakhwada beneficiary numbers; Vande Bharat ridership.
- **Figures that differ between sources:** the 131st Amendment vote date (17 or 18 April) and its Census base; Tamil Nadu turnout (84.69% or 84.80%); Kerala's final turnout; the date of the Arunachal hydro approvals (8 or 9 April); SIPRI's fourth-ranked country; the Breakthrough Prize date (15 or 19 April); the Doval-MBZ meeting date (25 or 26 April); the Dustlik start date (12 or 13 April).
- **Corrections to earlier issues:** the US Section 122 tariff is 10%, not 15% (February issue); the Plastic Waste Management amendment was notified in final form on 31 March, not left as a draft (March issue). Puducherry has 30 elected Assembly seats.
- **Approximate map points:** volcano points, Indian Ocean places, Arunachal project sites and exercise venues are placed approximately; all maps are location diagrams without boundaries.
- The ethics case study and essay themes are original practice material, not reports of real events.

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