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A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative

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By- Nandan Sir

April 2nd Week 2026

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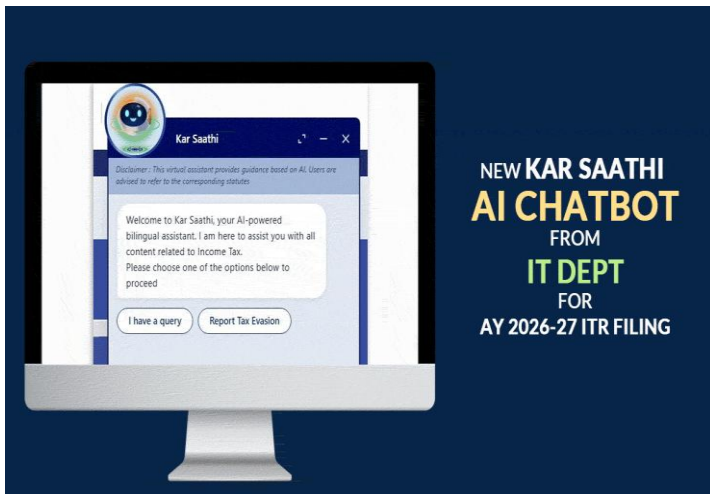
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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
APRIL 2ND Week 2026

Kar Saathi
Economy



Context

- An AI-enabled digital chatbot platform launched by the Income Tax Department to provide 24×7 guidance on direct tax matters under the new Income Tax Act, 2025 framework.

Kar Saathi

- It provides round-the-clock assistance for queries related to ITR filing, tax provisions, forms, notices, deductions, refunds, and compliance.
- It brings all direct tax-related resources such as forms, challans, e-payment, e-verification, and FAQs under one platform.
- Supports taxpayer grievance resolution and compliance queries.

Connect with the basics -

Direct Tax

- A direct tax is paid straight to the government by the person or business that earns the income or profit.

- The **burden of this tax cannot be shifted to anyone** else; you are **solely responsible for paying it**.
- **Governing Body: Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).**

Key Examples:

- **Income Tax:** Paid by **individuals** on their annual earnings.
- **Corporate Tax:** Paid by **companies** on their yearly profits.
- **Capital Gains Tax:** Levied on profits from **selling assets like property or stocks**.
- **Securities Transaction Tax (STT):** Charged on the **sale and purchase of securities on stock exchanges**.

Indirect Tax

- An indirect tax is levied on the **consumption of goods and services**.
- Unlike direct taxes, the burden is transferable; a shopkeeper pays the tax to the government but recovers that cost from you through the selling price.
- **Governing Body: Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).**

Key Examples:

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** The primary indirect tax in India that replaced multiple older taxes like VAT and service tax.
- **Customs Duty:** Imposed on goods **imported into or exported out of India**.
- **Excise Duty:** Still applicable to limited items like **petroleum products and alcohol**

E20 Petrol Environment



Context

- India has officially mandated the nationwide rollout of E20 petrol at all fuel stations from April 1, 2025.

E20 petrol

- It refers to a **fuel blend of 20% ethanol and 80% petrol.**
- **Objective** - It is a critical part of India's **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme**, which aims to **reduce reliance on crude oil imports and lower vehicular emissions.**
- **Target Advancement:** The initial target for 20% blending was 2030, but it was advanced to 2025–26 under the amended National Policy on Biofuels (2022).

Significance for India

Category	Impact
Energy Security	Reduces dependence on imported crude oil (~85% of India's needs are imported).
Economic	Saves roughly ₹30,000-₹50,000 crore in foreign exchange annually.
Environment	Lowers carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and particulate matter emissions by 30-50% .
Agriculture	Boosts rural income by creating demand for crops like sugarcane, maize, and damaged food grains.

India's Push for Piped Natural Gas Science and Tech

Context

- India is accelerating the expansion of **Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections** to reduce import dependence, improve energy security, and transition towards a cleaner fuel mix.

Types of Gases

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG):

- **Composition:** Propane and Butane.
- **State & Storage:** Stored as a **liquid** under moderate **pressure in cylinders.**
- **Usage:** Domestic cooking, water heating, and small-scale industrial applications.
- **Key Characteristic:** **Heavier than air; collects on the ground if leaked.**

Piped Natural Gas (PNG):

- **Composition:** Primarily Methane.
- **State & Storage:** Delivered as a gas through underground pipelines.
- **Usage:** Residential kitchens, commercial cooking, and industries.
- **Key Characteristic:** Continuous supply; no need for cylinder storage.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG):

- **Composition:** Primarily Methane.
- **State & Storage:** Compressed to high pressure (200-250 bar) in tanks.
- **Usage:** Vehicles (cars, buses, autos) and low-pressure industrial burners.
- **Key Characteristic:** Cleaner burning than petrol/diesel.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):

- **Composition:** Primarily Methane.
- **State & Storage:** Cooled to roughly -160°C to become a liquid for transport.
- **Usage:** Transporting natural gas over long distances by sea, power generation.
- **Key Characteristic:** Volume is reduced by 600 times, making it easy to store in bulk.

India's Shift Towards Piped Natural Gas (PNG)

- **Reducing Import Dependence:** India imports nearly 60% of its LPG requirement, with a large share coming from West Asia and supply routes like Strait of Hormuz are geopolitically vulnerable.
- **Economic Efficiency:** PNG eliminates logistics costs associated with cylinder transportation and storage.
- Pricing can be more stable compared to LPG, which is sensitive to global oil prices.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Natural gas burns cleaner than LPG, producing fewer pollutants and greenhouse gases.

India's Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System Environment



Context

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) received the National Award for e-Governance 2025 for its indigenously developed Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System (MHEW-DSS).

Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System (MHEW-DSS)

- **Launched in 2024**, it is a digital platform that automates **decision-making in critical weather forecasting processes** and provides forecast and warning services to the public, government, and non-government agencies, as well as specific stakeholders.
- **Developed under Mission Mausam**, the system has automated 90% of weather data processing and improved forecast accuracy by 30%, while reducing preparation time from six hours to three.
- It **integrates real-time data from satellites, radars, and ground and upper air-based sensors** into a centralized GIS-enabled platform, replacing outdated manual workflows.

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- It was **established in 1875** and completed 150 years of service in 2025.
- **Functions under - Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- **Objective** - It is a government agency responsible for **meteorological observations, weather forecasting, and seismology in India.**

Mission Mausam

- It is an ambitious multi-faceted initiative **launched by Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**
- **Objective** - to transform the country into a "weather-ready and climate-smart" nation. It aims to dramatically improve the accuracy and lead time of weather and climate forecasts.

Indonesia Geography



Context

- A **magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck the Northern Molucca Sea off Indonesia's Ternate island.**

Indonesia

Basic Geography:

- **World's largest archipelagic state**, located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, off mainland Southeast Asia.
- **Major islands: Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi, Papua.**

- It shares land borders with **East Timor (Timor-Leste), Papua New Guinea, and Malaysia.**
- **Capital: Jakarta** (on the island of Java); new capital being developed — Nusantara in Kalimantan

Tectonic Setting:

- **Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, the seismically active belt where ~90% of the world's earthquakes occur.**
- The **Molucca Sea** — where the recent earthquake originated — is a highly active tectonic zone in Indonesia's northern region.

Additional Information - Ring of Fire



- **Known as - The Ring of Fire also referred to as the Circum-Pacific Belt is present along the land borders of the Pacific Ocean.**
- **Features** - It is characterized by **active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.**
- **Significance** - It consists of **75% of Earth's volcanoes i.e. more than 450 volcanoes are located along the Ring of Fire.**
- **Reason for the occurrence** - The abundance of volcanoes and earthquakes along the Ring of Fire is **due to the frequent movement of tectonic plates in this area.**

Volcanoes in India

- **Barren Island, Andaman Islands (India's only active volcano)**
- **Narcondam, Andaman Islands**
- **Baratang, Andaman Islands**
- **Deccan Traps, Maharashtra**

NCERT Granted Deemed University Tag Government Initiatives

In News

- **The Ministry of Education has declared the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) an Institution Deemed to be a University.**

Impact of the Decision

- **NCERT can now start courses and academic programmes** and also award degrees.
- It has also been asked to begin **research programmes, doctoral programmes, and innovative academic programmes.**
- NCERT should also gradually expand into other academic domains in line with UGC norms and regulations, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Additional Information - The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

- It is an autonomous organisation **established in 1961**
- **Mandate** - It assists and advises Central and State governments on policies and programmes **aimed at improving the quality of school education.**

Key Roles and Functions

- **Curriculum Development:** NCERT is the nodal agency for developing the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)**, which sets the standard for school education in India.

- **Textbook Publication:** It publishes model textbooks for **Classes I to XII in English, Hindi, and Urdu.**
- **Educational Research & Training:** It promotes **research in school education** and provides pre-service and **in-service training for teachers.**
- **Digital Initiatives:** Through platforms like **ePathshala and DIKSHA**, it offers **free digital access to textbooks, audio, and video resources.**

Yuva Sangam Government Initiatives

Context

- Registrations for institution-led exposure tours under **Yuva Sangam Phase-VI were held**, covering 22 States and Union Territories.

Yuva Sangam

- It is an initiative by the Government of India **to strengthen people-to-people connect between youth belonging to different States/UTs of India.**
- It was **conceptualised by the Ministry of Education** and was **launched under the banner of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB).**

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)

- It is a landmark initiative **to celebrate the country's unity in diversity.**
- It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi **on 31st October 2015**, coinciding with the **140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.**

Key Initiatives Under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- **Yuva Sangam:** A **youth exchange program** that allows students and off-campus youth to travel to paired states, focusing on five

pillars: Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Tradition), Pragati (Progress), Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect), and Devshakti (Spiritual connection).

- **Bhasha Sangam:** An initiative to encourage people to learn basic sentences in different Indian languages, promoting linguistic harmony.
- **Educational Integration:** Schools and universities across the country conduct EBSB clubs, student exchange trips, and cultural festivals like Kala Utsav.
- **Special Events: Celebration of Statehood Days** and integration of cultural themes in national events like **Bharat Parv**.
- **Implementation - The Ministry of Education** serves as the nodal ministry for coordinating the program

Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) Economy

Context

- The West Asia crisis has led to India's Manufacturing PMI falling from 56.9 in February 2026 compared to 53.9 in March 2026.

Comparison: PMI vs. IIP

Feature	Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)	Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
Source	Private (S&P Global)	Government (NSO, MoSPI)
Basis	Perception-based survey	Actual physical output data
Coverage	Manufacturing & Services	Broad Industrial Sector (Mining, Mfg, Elec)
Timing	Monthly, at the start of the month	Monthly, with a 6-week lag

Coal Gasification Incentive Scheme Economy

In Context

- The Union Minister has unveiled India's roadmap to address this through domestic coal utilisation, with the Coal Gasification Incentive Scheme as a central instrument.

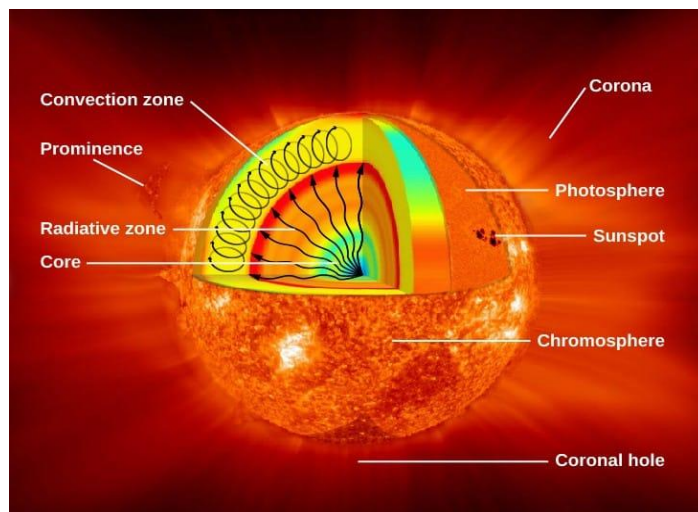
Coal Gasification

- Coal gasification is the process of converting coal into syngas (synthesis gas) — a mixture primarily of hydrogen (H₂) and carbon monoxide (CO) — through a reaction with steam and oxygen at high temperatures.

Syngas serves as a feedstock for producing:

- **Ammonia** → used in fertiliser manufacturing
- **Methanol** → used as fuel and chemical feedstock
- **Hydrogen** → clean energy carrier
- **Synthetic natural gas** → substitute for imported LNG.

Aditya-L1 Mission Science and Tech



News

- ISRO invites proposals from the Indian solar physics community to analyse data from the Aditya-L1 mission.

Aditya-L1 mission

- **Uniqueness** - Aditya-L1 is the **first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun. It will be launched by the PSLV-C57.**
- **Note** - The solar mission will not see the spacecraft actually go to the sun, it will instead create a space observatory at a point from which the sun can be observed even during an eclipse.
- The spacecraft is planned to be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1), around 1.5 million km from the Earth, of the Sun-Earth system.

Major objectives of the mission

- The mission will focus on study of the **Solar upper atmospheric (chromosphere and corona) dynamics.**
- It will also identify what drives space weather, along with the origin, composition and dynamics of the solar wind.

Additional Information - International Solar Missions

Mission	Space Agency	Key Feature
Parker Solar Probe (2018)	NASA	Closest mission to the Sun; first spacecraft to "touch" the corona.
Solar Orbiter (2020)	ESA & NASA	Focuses on high-resolution images of the Sun's poles.
SOHO (1995)	ESA & NASA	An older observatory at L1 that has provided over two decades of solar data.
PUNCH (2025)	NASA	A constellation of four small satellites studying how the corona becomes solar wind.
ASO-S (Kuafu-1) (2022)	CNSA (China)	Studies the relationship between the solar magnetic field, solar flares, and CMEs.

INS Taragiri Defence



Context

- **INS Taragiri, a Nilgiri-class stealth guided missile frigate, has been commissioned into the Indian Navy.**

INS Taragiri

- **It is the 4th of the 7 Project 17A multi-mission stealth guided missile frigates.**
- It was **built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).**
- It is named after the Taragiri hill ranges of Uttarakhand.
- **About 75% of the ship is indigenously built.**

Key Features

- It is designed for **multi-role operations across air, surface and sub-surface warfare.**
- It is equipped with **MF-STAR radar, MRSAM, Barak air defence missiles, and BrahMos missiles.**

Additional Information - Project 17A (P-17A)

- **Objective:** To build seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates for the Indian Navy.
- **Key Manufacturers:** The project is split between Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai (4 ships) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata (3 ships).

- Design: Designed in-house by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB).
- Indigenization: Approximately 75% of the content is indigenous, involving over 200 MSMEs, aligning with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) initiative.

List of Seven Frigates

1. **INS Nilgiri** - Commissioned Jan 2025
2. **INS Himgiri** - Commissioned Aug 2025
3. **INS Udaygiri** - Commissioned Aug 2025
4. **INS Taragiri** - Commissioned April 2026
5. **INS Dunagiri** - Delivered March/April 2026
6. **INS Vindhyagiri** - Under sea trials/outfitting
7. **INS Mahendragiri** - Under construction/outfitting

INS Aridhaman Defence



In News

- **INS Aridaman**, part of India's Arihant-class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) fleet, has been commissioned as a more advanced platform than its predecessors — **INS Arihant (commissioned 2016)** and **INS Arighaat (commissioned 2024)**.

Key Features

- It is larger than **INS Arihant** and **INS Arighaat**, with a displacement of about **7,000 tonnes**.

- It can carry up to **24 K-15 Sagarika missiles**, or **8 K-4 / K-5 missiles**.
- The **K-4 missile has a range of about 3,500 km**.
- These are **nuclear-capable submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs)**.
- **India's Nuclear Submarine Programme** - It was developed through **collaboration between DRDO, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), the Navy, and private defence firms**, with technical assistance from Russia in the early phases.

Major Ports in India Surpass Cargo Target Syllabus: **GS3/ Infrastructure**

Context

- The major ports of India handled **915.17 million tonnes (MT)** of cargo in FY 2025–26, exceeding the target of **904 MT** and recording a **7.06% year-on-year growth**.

About

- There are **14 major ports** out of which **12 Major Ports are in Operation** and **200 non-major ports (minor ports)** in the country.
- **New ports: Vadhavan Port in Maharashtra and Galathea Bay Port in Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, have been notified as Major Ports.
- While the Major Ports are under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**, the non-major ports are under the jurisdiction of respective State Maritime Boards/ State Government.

Operational Major Ports in India

Western Coast Ports	Eastern Coast Ports
Deendayal Port (Kandla, Gujarat)	Paradip Port (Odisha)
Mumbai Port (Maharashtra)	Visakhapatnam Port (Andhra Pradesh)
Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT, Maharashtra)	Chennai Port (Tamil Nadu)
Mormugao Port (Goa)	Kamarajar Port (Ennore, Tamil Nadu)
New Mangalore Port (Karnataka)	V.O. Chidambaranar Port (Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu)
Cochin Port (Kerala)	Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port (Kolkata-Haldia, West Bengal)

OPEC+

Syllabus: GS2/ Regional Groupings

Context

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries** group decided to **increase oil production by 206,000 barrels per day** amid rising global energy tensions.

OPEC and OPEC+

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in September **1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.**
- **OPEC Members (12 Nations):** The core organization includes Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait,

Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.

- **Non-OPEC Partners (10 Nations):** The extended “Plus” group consists of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan, and Sudan
- **OPEC is headquartered at Vienna, Austria.**
- **In 2016, OPEC formed an alliance with other oil-producing nations to create OPEC+.** The 10 countries now in OPEC+ include Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Mexico, and Oman.
- **Member states of OPEC hold more than 80% of the world’s proven oil reserves.**
- OPEC produces about **40% of the world’s crude oil** and its members’ exports make up around **60% of global petroleum trade.**

Stagflation

Syllabus: GS3/ Economy

In Context

- The ongoing **US-Israel vs Iran conflict** has triggered a **sharp energy supply disruption**, reviving fears of stagflation.

Stagflation

- Definition: Simultaneous occurrence of **stagnant/negative economic growth + high unemployment + high inflation.**
- **Term Coined By: British politician Iain Macleod (1960s).**
- **Why It’s Dangerous:** Normal monetary policy tools fail, **raising interest rates fights inflation but worsens unemployment; cutting rates boosts growth but fuels inflation further.**

Project Chetak celebrates 47th Raising Day
Syllabus: GS3/Infrastructure/Internal Security



Context

- **Project Chetak of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) celebrated its 47th Raising Day.**

Project Chetak

- It is one of the **largest projects of the BRO in terms of geographical area.**
- Raised in 1980, it has played a key role in **developing and maintaining road networks across Rajasthan, Punjab and northern parts of Gujarat.**
- It **supports the Defence Forces by maintaining key feeder roads** towards the International Border.

Additional Information - Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- **Established in** - It was formed in **1960** by **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**
- **Objective** - To coordinate the **speedy development of an adequate road communication network of roads in the North and the North-Eastern border regions** of the country.

- **Functions under** - It works under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Defence.**
- **Significance** - **Support the armed forces meet their strategic needs** by committed, dedicated and cost-effective development and sustenance of the infrastructure.
- **Recent and upcoming Projects:** This includes the construction of **Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh on Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang Road.**

BioNEST

Syllabus: Miscellaneous

Context Probiotics and postbiotics

- **Recently, the BIRAC-BioNEST Incubation Centre was inaugurated at CSIR-CFTRI, Mysuru.**

BIRAC-BioNEST Incubation Centre

- **Objective** - to support **food bioprocessing, biotechnology research, scale-up validation, and regulatory support.**
- Its main goal is to **convert scientific research into market-ready products.**
- **Focus Areas:** The startups are working in emerging areas such as **Nutraceuticals, Precision fermentation, CRISPR-based technologies and Botanicals.**

CFTRI	BIRAC
<p>Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru</p> <p>It is a constituent laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi.</p>	<p>Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)</p> <p>– It is a not-for-profit Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India as an Interface Agency.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It came into existence during 1950. - Its vision is to pursue in-depth research and development in the areas of food science and technology. - Key areas of research CSIR-CFTRI include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engineering Sciences b. Technology Development c. Translational Research d. Food Protection and Safety - CFTRI has its Resource Centres at Hyderabad, Lucknow and Mumbai. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It strengthens and empowers the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.
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Bharat Tribes Fest 2026
Syllabus: GS2/Governance

Context

- **Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 was concluded recently.**

About

- It is a flagship **initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs** organised in association with **TRIFED**.
- **Objective** - The 19-day festival brought together tribal artisans, entrepreneurs, and self-help groups from across the country,

showcasing **India's diverse tribal heritage and products.**

Additional Information - Tribes of Karnataka

- Karnataka is **home to approximately 50 notified Scheduled Tribes**, representing about **6.95% of the state's total population**.
- These communities are primarily concentrated in the districts of **Bellary, Raichur, Mysore, Chitradurga, and Belgaum**.

Major Tribal Communities

- **Naikda / Nayaka / Bedar:** This is the **largest tribal group in Karnataka**. Historically a warrior and hunter community, they are also **known by names like Valmiki and Beda**.
- **Gond:** The **second-largest tribal group in the state**, primarily settled in northern districts like **Bidar and Uttara Kannada**.
- **Jenu Kuruba:** Their name literally translates to "honey people" (**Jenu means honey**), reflecting their **traditional expertise in honey gathering** in the Western Ghats.
- **Soliga (Sholaga):** Primarily **inhabiting the Biligiriranga Hills (BR Hills)**, they have a **deep spiritual connection to the forest** and are known for practicing shifting cultivation.
- **Hakkipikki:** Historically semi-nomadic "**bird catchers**" (**Hakki means bird, Pikki means catch**), they claim ancestral links to the warrior clans of Rajasthan.
- **Siddi:** A unique **ethnic group of African descent**, brought to India centuries ago. They are mostly found in **the forests of Uttara Kannada** and are known for their **distinct culture and "Kawandi" quilting art**.
- **Koraga:** Identified as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**, they are

native to coastal districts like Udupi and Dakshina Kannada and are traditional basket weavers and drum beaters.

- **Yerava:** Mostly found in Kodagu and Mysore, they are traditionally forest-dwellers who now often work in coffee and tea plantations.

India Achieves Milestone in Nuclear Energy Programme

Syllabus: GS3/ Science and Technology

Context

- India has achieved a major milestone as the **indigenously built Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam has attained criticality.**

Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

- PFBR is an advanced reactor **that generates more fissile fuel than it consumes.**
- India's PFBR is **located at Kalpakkam and operated by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited.**
- It uses **Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel.**

It is called a fast breeder because;

- It uses high-energy, fast neutrons to sustain the fission reaction, rather than the slowed-down thermal neutrons used in standard reactors.
- It converts fertile material (like Uranium-238) into fissile material (Plutonium-239).
- The criticality refers to the point at which a reactor achieves a self-sustaining nuclear fission reaction, where the number of neutrons produced is sufficient to keep the reaction going without external intervention.

Significance of the Achievement

- **Advancement of India's Three-Stage Nuclear Programme:** The PFBR marks progress in

the second stage of India's three-stage nuclear programme.

- It enables the conversion of fertile material into fissile fuel.
- It lays the foundation for the third stage, which focuses on thorium utilization.
- **Harnessing Thorium Potential:** India possesses vast thorium reserves, and the PFBR helps generate the required fissile material (U-233) for thorium-based reactors.
- Thorium-232, is not fissile but can be converted into a fissile material.
- **Technological and Strategic Significance:** India becomes only the second country after Russia to develop a commercial fast breeder reactor.
- It demonstrates advanced indigenous capability in nuclear technology and engineering.

Namo Drone Didi Scheme

Syllabus: GS2/Governance

Context

- According to the **Ministry of Civil Aviation a total of 1,094 SHG members have been trained as drone pilots in the country.**

Namo Drone Didi

- **Launched in - 2023**
- **Aim - to empower rural women by making them "Agri-tech" entrepreneurs.**
- **Objective - It aims to provide 15,000 drones to selected Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across India between 2024 and 2026.**
- **Financing - It is a Central Sector Scheme (100% funded by the Union)**
- **Implementation - Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**

Key features

- **Women Empowerment:** Transforming women in SHGs into skilled drone pilots and service providers.
- **Modernizing Agriculture:** Promoting precision farming—using drones to spray liquid fertilizers (like Nano Urea) and pesticides accurately, which reduces waste and health risks for farmers.
- **Livelihood Generation:** Creating an additional annual income of at least ₹1 lakh for each SHG through drone rental services.

Babu Jagjivan Ram
Syllabus: Person in News



Context

- PM Modi paid tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram on his birth anniversary.

Babu Jagjivan Ram

- He was a **freedom fighter and social reformer** born on 5 April 1908 in Chandwa village (present-day Bihar).
- He studied at **Banaras Hindu University** and later graduated from **University of Calcutta**.
- **Role in Freedom Struggle:** He was inspired by **Mahatma Gandhi** and actively participated in the national movement.
- He took part in the **Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement**.

- **Social Justice Contributions:** He founded the **Akhil Bharatiya Ravidas Mahasabha** and the **All India Depressed Classes League** to mobilize marginalized communities.
- He was instrumental in the **enactment of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955**.
- **Political Career:** He was a member of the Constituent Assembly of India.
- As Food & Agriculture Minister, he is credited with the **Green Revolution** and as Defence Minister he led India to the historic 1971 war, which saw the birth of Bangladesh.
- He served as the **Deputy Prime Minister of India** in 1979 under Morarji Desai.

Custodial Deaths in India **Governance**

Context

- A trial court in Madurai sentenced 9 Tamil Nadu policemen to death for the brutal 2020 custodial killing of a father and son, P. Jayaraj and J. Benicks.

Custodial Death

- Custodial death refers to the **death of an individual while in police or judicial custody**.
- This may occur before trial, during police interrogation, or after conviction.
- The death may be caused by **torture, negligence, denial of medical aid, or even under suspicious circumstances**.

It violates the Constitutional Rights

- **Article 20(1):** No person shall be punished beyond what is prescribed in law.
- **Article 20(3):** **Right against Self-Incrimination**, stating that "No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself."

- **Article 21:** Ensures protection of life and personal liberty, including in police/judicial custody.
- **Issue of Custodial Death in India:** According to parliamentary data, **11,656 custodial deaths were recorded between 2016-17 and 2021-22**, across India.
- **Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 2,630 deaths**, while Tamil Nadu (490) reported the highest number among the southern States.

International Legal Frameworks for Protection

- **United Nations Charter (1945):** It sets out the purposes and principles of the UN, including the **promotion of human rights**.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** It prohibits torture and ensures the presumption of innocence.
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966):** It protects right to life and prohibits torture.
- The **Nelson Mandela Rules**, officially known as the **UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners 2015**, establish minimum standards for the humane treatment of all individuals deprived of their liberty.
- **European Convention on Human Rights (1950):** It recognises individual dignity and access to justice mechanisms.

India Achieves Highest-ever Annual Wind Energy Addition Environment

Context

- **India has achieved the highest-ever annual wind energy capacity addition of 6.05 GW in 2025-26**, taking cumulative installed capacity to over **56 GW**.

India's Energy Share

- As of 2025, the **country's total installed electricity capacity has crossed 500 GW, reaching 509.6 GW**.
- The total **non-fossil power installed capacity has reached 262.74 GW in 2025** which is **51.5% of the total installed electricity capacity in the country**.
- The **solar energy installed capacity has reached 132.85 GW in 2025**.
- **Fossil-fuel-based sources: 244.80 GW, about 49 % of the total**.
- Globally, **India stands 3rd in Solar Power installed capacity, 4th in Wind Power capacity and 4th in total Renewable Energy capacity**.

India's Energy Targets

- **Emissions Intensity Reduction:** India has committed to **reducing the emissions intensity (CO₂ per unit of GDP) of its GDP by 47% by 2035 from 2005 levels**.
- **Expansion of Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity:** India has committed to achieving **60% of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2035**.
- **Creation of Carbon Sink:** India has committed to creating a carbon sink of **3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2035**.

Government Initiatives

- **National Solar Mission (NSM):** It was launched in 2010, it has set ambitious targets for solar capacity installation, including grid-connected and off-grid solar power projects.
- **National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF):** It was established to support research and innovation in clean energy technologies and projects that help in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **National Wind Energy Mission:** Focuses on the development and expansion of wind energy in India. The target for wind energy capacity is set at 140 GW by 2030.

Tar Balls Management Rules Environment



Context

- The Centre has, for the first time, proposed **dedicated rules to manage tar balls that cause on-shore and off-shore marine pollution.**

Connect with the basics- Marine Tar balls

- They are **sticky, dark-colored lumps of weathered oil** that form after **oil spills, leaks, or natural seepage in the marine environment.**

Formation

- **Weathering Process:** They form through **weathering**, where lighter oil components evaporate, leaving behind heavier hydrocarbons that mix with sand and marine debris.
- **Size & Texture:** Their size varies from pea-sized globules to basketball-sized lumps.
- **Composition:** They contain **toxic contaminants like heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and**

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Impact of Tar Ball Pollution

- **Marine Life:** Marine animals like sea turtles and seabirds may ingest them, leading to death. They also clog the pores of mangroves and coral reefs.
- **Human Health:** Direct contact can cause skin irritation, and toxic chemicals can enter the human food chain through contaminated seafood.
- **Economy:** Significant negative impact on tourism (due to oily beaches and odor) and fisheries (fouling of fishing nets).

Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026

- Framed under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, these rules establish **India's first dedicated regulatory framework for tar balls.**

Feature	Description
Polluter Pays Principle	Facility owners are liable to pay compensation for environmental damage caused by leaks or improper handling.
Disaster Classification	Coastal states are required to declare tar ball pollution as a " State Disaster ".
Institutional Roles	The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) implements the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP); district administrations manage local cleanup.
Circular Economy	Tar balls with high calorific value (>1,500 kcal) can be repurposed as fuel in the cement industry.

Sundarbans Losing Ability to Recover Environment

Context

- A recent study shows that around **10–15 percent of the Sundarbans is undergoing a “critical slowing down” process from environmental stress.**

Sundarbans in West Bengal

Geographical location

- It is a vast contiguous mangrove forest ecosystem present in the **coastal region of Bay of Bengal**
- It spread over **India and Bangladesh** on the **Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna delta.**

Conservation efforts

- **UNESCO World Heritage site** - Sundarbans National Park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987.
- **Biosphere Reserve** - Sunderbans was designated as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2001.
- **Wetland of International Importance** - Sundarban Wetland, India was recognised as the ‘Wetland of International Importance’ **under the Ramsar Convention in January 2019.**
- **Flora and Fauna** - Sunderban National Park is known for its wide range of fauna, including 260 bird species and is **home to the Royal Bengal tiger, Gangetic dolphins and Estuarine crocodile**

Supreme Court Hearing on Sabarimala Case Polity and Governance

Context

- A nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India has begun **hearings on petitions concerning women’s entry into religious places, including the Sabarimala Temple.**

Background

- In **2018, a Constitution Bench (4:1 majority)** allowed **entry of women of menstruating age into the temple, declaring the restriction unconstitutional.**
- Due to widespread protests, in 2019, the matter was referred to a larger bench.
- **Significance:** The issue **reflects tension between Fundamental Rights on equality/non-discrimination (Articles 14, 15, 17) and Religious Freedom (Articles 25, 26).**
- It also **raises questions on Judicial activism vs restraint and Secularism** in India (principled distance model).

Additional Information - Sabarimala Temple

- **Location and Deity:** The Sabarimala Temple is located in the **Pathanamthitta district of Kerala** on the **banks of the sacred Pamba River** (also known as Pampa), **within the Periyar Tiger Reserve** in the Western Ghats.
- It is **dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, also known as Dharmashasta.**
- The temple is situated on a hilltop at an **elevation of about 1,260 metres.**
- **Religious Significance:** It is one of the **largest annual pilgrimage centres in the world.** Devotees undertake a **rigorous 41-day ‘Vratham’ (penance)** before visiting.
- The temple symbolises **celibacy (Naishtika Brahmacharya)** of Lord Ayyappa.

Credit Guarantee Scheme Economy

Context

- The government is considering a **₹2.5 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme to support businesses, especially MSMEs impacted by the West Asia crisis.**

About

- The scheme will be an **expansion of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** framework.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- It was **launched in 2020** as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan
- **Objective - to support eligible MSMEs and other eligible business enterprises due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- ECLGS covered **almost all the sectors of the economy.**

The structure of the scheme permitted

1. Easy access to credit
2. Interest rate was also capped to lowest.
3. Credit and loans were sanctioned without any processing charges.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) International

In News

- **Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz.**

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the **six principal organs of the United Nations**
- **Objective - to maintain international peace and security.**
- It is the **only UN body empowered to issue legally binding resolutions that all UN member states are obligated to comply with under international law.**
- **Structure and Composition:** The Council has **15 members** divided into two categories:

- **Permanent Members (P5) with Veto Power: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
- A single veto from any P5 member is sufficient to block any substantive resolution, regardless of how many other members support it.
- **Non-Permanent Members (10 seats):** Elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms, distributed geographically.
- **Headquarters: New York, USA**

Mission MITRA Science & Technology



In News

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, in collaboration with the IAF-Institute of Aerospace Medicine, **has launched Mission MITRA in Leh, Ladakh.**

Mission MITRA

- **Full Form: Mapping of Interoperable Traits and Response Assessment.**
- **Agencies Involved:** Designed jointly by ISRO and the Indian Air Force's Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM).
- **Location:** Leh, Ladakh (~3,500 meters altitude).
- **Participants:** Includes the four designated **Gaganyatris (astronauts)** for the Gaganyaan mission: **Prasanth Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap, and Shubhanshu Shukla.**

Objectives and Significance

- The mission is an "analogue mission," meaning it **uses Earth-based environments that mimic the physical and psychological stressors of space.**
- **Human Factors Engineering:** Studies how hypoxia (low oxygen), extreme cold, and isolation affect crew decision-making and teamwork.
- **Interoperability:** Evaluates coordination between the crew and Ground Control Teams under operational stress and simulated communication delays.
- **Gaganyaan Preparation:** The data directly informs training protocols for the upcoming crewed Gaganyaan mission (expected in late 2026 or early 2027) and future long-duration stays at the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS).



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