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A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative

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ಕನ್ನಡ & English

By- Nandan Sir

April 3rd Week 2026

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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
APRIL 3RD Week 2026

Soil Sakhis
Economy



Context

- The “Soil Sakhis” initiative in drought-prone districts of western Maharashtra is empowering women while improving soil health and agricultural productivity.

Soil Sakhis

- **Launched in - 2023.**
- Trains rural women as “Soil Sakhis” to promote soil testing and scientific farming practices.
- Implemented in Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Kolhapur, and Pune districts.

Key Features

- Soil Sakhis collect samples and facilitate soil testing through laboratories.
- Farmers receive actionable reports for improved crop and nutrient management.
- Soil Sakhis earn about ₹8,000–₹10,000 per month (excluding petrol allowance).

FSSAI Cannot Regulate Animal Feed
Health



Context

- The Delhi High Court struck down a Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulation that prohibited the sale of animal feed containing meat or bone meal of milk-producing animals.
- About
- FSSAI banned the use of meat or bone meal in feed meant for milk- and meat-producing animals, except poultry, pigs and fish.
- The Delhi High Court held that FSSAI is not empowered to prescribe standards for food meant for animal consumption and its mandate is limited to food for humans.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- It is an autonomous statutory body established under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It was created by the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- **Composition:** Led by a Chairperson (rank of Secretary to the Government of India) and 22 members, of whom one-third must be women.
- **Structure:** Headquartered in New Delhi with 6–8 regional offices (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Guwahati, Kochi).

Functions:

1. Laying down science-based standards for food.
2. Licensing and registration of Food Business Operators (FBOs).
3. Monitoring manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food.
4. Accrediting food testing laboratories across India.

11 Years of Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)**Government Schemes****Context**

- **The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) has completed 11 years.**

About

- **Launched: In 2015.**
- **Aim: To support small-scale business ventures.**
- **Target Group:** New entrepreneurs, small shopkeepers, women entrepreneurs, street vendors, artisans, fruit/vegetable vendors, and small manufacturing units.
- These loans are given by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.**

MUDRA has created four products namely:

- **Shishu:** Covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/-.
- **Kishor:** Covering loans above Rs. 50,000/- and up to Rs. 5 lakhs.
- **Tarun:** Covering loans above Rs.5 lakh and upto Rs.10 lakhs.
- **TarunPlus:** Covering loans above Rs.10lakh and upto Rs.20 lakhs.

Decline of Lakes in Jammu & Kashmir Environment**Context**

- **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) finds nearly half of Jammu and Kashmir's lakes have vanished since 1967, warns of ecological crisis.**

Major Causes

- Unchecked human activities and encroachment;
- Weak institutional coordination;
- Absence of a unified regulatory framework, leading to land-use changes.

Major Lakes of J&K, Ladakh UT

- **Dal Lake:** Famous freshwater lake known for houseboats, shikaras, and floating gardens (Raad).
- **Wular Lake:** Wular Lake is the largest freshwater lake in India and has been formed due to tectonic activity. It is fed by the Jhelum River and is recognized as a Ramsar site.
- **Pangong Tso:** It is a high-altitude brackish water lake extending into Tibet, known for its changing colors and strategic importance.
- **Tso Moriri:** It is another high-altitude brackish lake and a Ramsar site.
- **Manasbal Lake:** It is considered one of the deepest freshwater lakes in the region and the Mughal garden Jaroka Bagh, built by Nur Jahan, overlooks the lake.
- **Hokersar Wetland:** Often referred to as the "Queen of Wetlands".
- **Surinsar Lake and Mansar Lake:** They are twin lakes and are Ramsar sites.

Central Armed Police Forces Defence**In News**

- The Centre has notified the **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026**, which creates a unified legal framework to regulate the recruitment, deputation, promotion, and conditions of service for officers.

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)

- **Functions under - Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- **Mandate -** They are responsible for border guarding, internal security, counter-insurgency, and infrastructure protection.

- **Significance** - The forces include **CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, NSG, and Assam Rifles**, designed to assist state police and maintain law and order.

Key Components and Roles:

- **Border Guarding:** Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and Assam Rifles (AR) patrol borders.
- **Internal Security:** Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) acts as the primary force for counter-naxal and counter-insurgency operations.
- **Industrial Security:** Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) secures critical infrastructure and airports.
- **Special Operations:** National Security Guard (NSG) serves as a specialized commando unit.

India Withdraws Bid to Host COP 33 in 2028 **Environment**

Context

- **India has withdrawn its candidature to host COP33 (2028) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process.**

Possible Reasons for Withdrawal

- **Administrative Burden:** Hosting a COP event requires substantial **infrastructure, security, and financial expenditure.**
- Preparations for other large-scale international events, such as the **proposed 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad**, will require similar administrative and financial resources.
- **Political Timing:** The year **2028 falls close to the 2029 Lok Sabha elections**, which is a period marked by intense administrative, political, and logistical engagements.

COP (Conference of Parties)

- The Conference of Parties (COP) is the **annual supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).**
- It brings together nearly 200 countries to **negotiate global climate action**, climate finance, and emission reduction commitments.
- **The first COP session was held in Berlin, Germany, in March 1995.**
- **Meeting:** The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- It is **one of the three Rio Conventions**, which were adopted at the **Earth Summit 1992** alongside the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).**
- The convention entered **into force in 1994.**
- **Objective** - to **stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations** in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
- **Secretariat:** The UNFCCC secretariat is **headquartered in Bonn, Germany.**
- **Major Instruments:** It is the parent treaty to two major legal agreements:
 1. **Kyoto Protocol (1997):** Set the **emission targets for developed countries.**
 2. **Paris Agreement (2015):** A landmark universal agreement aiming to **limit global warming to well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C**, above pre-industrial levels.
- **Financial Mechanisms:** Manages and coordinates funds such as the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, and the **Adaptation Fund** to assist developing nations.

Recent COP Meetings

- **COP27:** Held in **Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (2022).**

- **COP28:** Held in Dubai, UAE (2023), resulting in the “UAE Consensus” focused on transitioning away from fossil fuels.
- **COP 29:** held in Baku, Azerbaijan (2024)
- **COP 30:** Held in Belém, Brazil (2025)
- **COP 31:** Scheduled for Antalya, Türkiye (2026)

Light Pollution Environment

Context

- A study published in the journal Nature has found that **artificial light at night increased by 16% globally between 2014 and 2022.**
- The sharpest rise has been observed in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, with India and China emerging as major contributors in Asia.

Light pollution

- **Definition** - It is the excessive or inappropriate use of artificial outdoor light, which disrupts natural darkness and has adverse effects on human health, wildlife, and the environment.

Environmental and Health Impacts

Biodiversity & Wildlife:

- **Navigation:** Disorients **migratory birds and sea turtle hatchlings** that rely on natural light (moon/stars) for guidance.
- **Reproduction:** Interferes with the **mating calls of fireflies and the hatching of species like clownfish.**
- **Ecosystem Flow:** **Hardens tree leaves, making them less suitable for herbivorous insects to eat, which disrupts urban food chains.**

Human Health:

- **Circadian Rhythm:** Disrupts the body's natural 24-hour sleep-wake cycle.
- **Melatonin Suppression:** **Inhibits the production of melatonin, which is essential**

for sleep and has been linked to increased risks of **insomnia, stress, and certain cancers (e.g., breast cancer).**

- **Neurodegenerative Diseases:** Recent studies have suggested a correlation between night-time light pollution and the incidence of **Alzheimer's disease.**
- **Economy & Energy:** Wastes **billions of units of electricity annually, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.**

Government Initiatives to Curb Light Pollution

- **Energy Conservation Building Code (2017):** The ECBC is a set of standards established by **India's Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** to promote sustainable design and **reduce energy consumption by 25–50% in new commercial buildings.**
- **Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP):** Launched in 2015, to **replace conventional street lights with smart and energy-efficient LED streetlights** across the country.
- **Smart Cities Mission:** **Adaptive lighting is a core component of India's Smart Cities Mission, designed to optimize energy consumption and reduce light pollution** by dynamically adjusting street lamp intensity based on real-time traffic and time conditions.
- **Environmental Protection Act 1986:** Provides umbrella power to the Central Government to **regulate environmental pollution of all kinds.**

Constitution of India in Sindhi Language Governance

In News

- **Recently, the Vice-President released the latest version of the Constitution of India in the Sindhi language in both Devanagari and Persian scripts.**

About Sindhi

- It is an **Indo-Aryan language spoken in Pakistan and in India**, with smaller communities worldwide.
- It was **officially included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India by the 21st Constitutional Amendment Act 1967**.
- It is **one of the oldest and most melodious languages with a rich literary tradition blending Vedantic and Sufi philosophies** that promote unity, love, and brotherhood.

Sentinel Species Environment



Context

- **Emperor Penguin (Aptenodytes forsteri) upgraded from Near Threatened to Endangered on the IUCN Red List**, driven by climate-induced sea-ice loss.
- As a sentinel species, **its decline signals broader Antarctic ecosystem stress**, populations projected to halve by the 2080s.

What is a Sentinel Species

- It is a **plant or animal whose health reflects the overall condition of the ecosystem it inhabits**.
- They **respond quickly and visibly to environmental stressors such as pollution, disease, and climate change**.
- They **act as early warning systems**, allowing detection of ecological imbalance before it becomes widespread.

Examples of Sentinel Species

- **Amphibians (Frogs):** Frogs have permeable skin, making them highly sensitive to pollutants and pathogens. Decline in frog populations is often an early indicator of ecosystem stress.
- **Canaries in Coal Mines:** Historically used to detect carbon monoxide poisoning. They showed distress before humans due to faster metabolism.
- **Honeybees:** Used to monitor agricultural chemicals and pesticide loads. Decline in bee populations signals ecosystem imbalance and pollination crisis.
- **Polar Bears:** Indicators of Arctic ecosystem health and contaminant accumulation. Reflect impacts of climate change and ice loss.

Ambedkar Jayanti History



Context

- **On April 14, India commemorates Ambedkar Jayanti**, marking the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar

- Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was a **social reformer, jurist, economist, author, polyglot (knowing or using several languages), orator, a scholar and thinker of comparative religions**.
- **Birth - He was born in 1891 in Mhow, Central Province (now Madhya Pradesh)**.

Brief Profile

- He is known as the **Father of the Indian Constitution** and was India's first **Law Minister**.
- He was the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution**.
- He was a **well-known statesman who fought for the rights of the Dalits and other socially backward classes**.

Contributions

- He led the **Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927 against Hindus** who were opposing the decision of the Municipal Board which had barred the untouchables from using water from the mahad tank.
- In 1926, the Municipal Board of Mahad (Maharashtra) passed an order to open the tank to all communities.
- He participated in all three **Round Table Conferences**.
- In 1932, Dr. Ambedkar signed the **Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhiji**, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (**Communal Award**).
- However, the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% of the total in the Central Legislature.
- His ideas before the **Hilton Young Commission** served as the foundation of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.

Election and Designation

- In 1937, he was elected to the **Bombay Legislative Assembly** as a legislator (MLA).
- He was appointed to the **Executive Council of Viceroy** as a Labour member in 1942.
- In 1947, Dr. Ambedkar accepted **PM Nehru's invitation** to become **Minister of Law** in the first Cabinet of independent India.

Shift to Buddhism

- He resigned from the cabinet in 1951, over differences on the **Hindu Code Bill**. He converted to **Buddhism** in 1956.
- He was awarded India's highest civilian honour the **Bharat Ratna** in 1990.

Important Works

Journals

- **Mooknayak (1920)**, **Bahishkrit Bharat (1927)**, **Samatha (1929)**, **Janata (1930)**.

Books

- **Annihilation of Caste**, **Buddha or Karl Marx**, **The Untouchable: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables**
- **Buddha and His Dhamma**
- **The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women**

Organizations

- **Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (1923)**
- **Independent Labor Party (1936)**
- **Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)**

Death

- He died on **6th December 1956**.
- **Chaitya Bhoomi** is a memorial to **B R Ambedkar**, located in **Mumbai**.

Relevance of Ambedkar in Present Times

- **Caste-based inequality in India still persists**. While Dalits have acquired a political identity through reservation and forming their own political parties, they lag behind in social (health and education) and economic dimension.

India Rejects China's Fictitious Naming of Places in Arunachal Pradesh International



In News

- India has strongly rejected China's attempts to assign "fictitious names" to places it considers part of its territory, calling such actions "mischievous" and harmful to bilateral relations.

China's actions

- China claims Arunachal Pradesh as "southern Tibet" (Zangnan)
- It has issued multiple lists of renamed locations since 2017, which India consistently rejects as invalid.
- China is creating administrative units such as He'an and Hekang counties in areas of Ladakh, including parts of Aksai Chin, which is a long-standing border dispute region.
- China has also reportedly created a new county, Cenling.

Cenling

- It is located near the Karakoram mountain range, which falls in the vicinity of Pakistan-

occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor.

- He'an - It included parts of the Aksai Chin plateau, which has been in focus because of the long-running India-China border issue.
- India's Response - The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated that regions like Arunachal Pradesh and other disputed areas are "integral and inalienable" parts of India.

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the western sector in Ladakh.

Project HIM SAROVAR Environment



Context

- Project Him Sarovar has been launched in Ladakh.

Project Him Sarovar

- It is a scientific water conservation initiative launched on April 10, 2026,

- The project aims to address chronic water scarcity in the region by creating 50 small water bodies to capture and store annual snowmelt and rainwater.

Key Objectives & Impact

- **Water Security:** To provide year-round water availability for irrigation and rural needs in the high-altitude cold desert, where melting snow often goes to waste.
- **Climate Resilience:** Serving as a "shield" against the visible impacts of climate change, such as receding glaciers and falling water tables.
- **Infrastructure Plan:** The goal is to construct 50 reservoirs—30 in Leh and 20 in Kargil—within the next year.
- **Restoration Goals:** Aligns with the national vision of restoring 2.6 crore hectares of degraded land by 2030

National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) Economy

Context

- The e-NAM portal reflects increasing market integration, with the number of connected mandis rising from 1,389 in 2024 to 1,656 as of March 2026, spanning 23 States and 4 Union Territories.

National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

- It is a pan-India electronic trading portal launched on April 14, 2016.
- It functions as a "central sector scheme" fully funded by the Central Government via the Agri-Tech Infrastructure Fund (ATIF).
- Its primary goal is to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities by networking existing Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis.

Core Objectives

- **Unified National Market:** Integrating state-level markets to facilitate pan-India trade,

moving towards the vision of "One Nation, One Market".

- **Transparent Price Discovery:** Enabling real-time price discovery based on actual demand and supply through transparent online auctions.
- **Reducing Intermediaries:** Minimising the role of middlemen to ensure farmers receive a larger share of the final consumer price.
- **Quality Assuring:** Implementing quality assaying and grading so that prices are commensurate with produce quality.

BRICS and Quad Groupings International Relations

In News

- India is going to host major diplomatic meetings including the **BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting and the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting.**

BRICS

- **Founded in - 2009**
- **HeadQuarters - Shanghai**
- It is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (included in 2010)**
- **Origin - The term "BRIC" was coined by the British Economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.**
- **Recent Expansion (BRICS+):** In 2024–2025, the bloc expanded to include **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Indonesia.** Saudi Arabia has received an invitation but has not yet formalized its membership.
- **Share of BRICS - BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries, representing 41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP, and 16% of the global trade (By 2028, BRICS is expected to make up 35 percent of the global economy)**
- **Chairmanship - The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members.**

Initiatives of BRICS

1. New Development Bank (NDB)
2. Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)
3. BRICS Payment System
4. Customs Agreements
5. Constellation of Remote Sensing Satellites

New Initiative

- **BRICS is planning to launch its own “new currency” system, a major step towards de-dollarization (reducing dependence on the US dollar for trade).**

India's 2026 Presidency

- **India assumed the BRICS Presidency on January 1, 2026, taking over from Brazil.**
- **18th Summit: India is set to host the 18th BRICS Summit in 2026.**
- **Theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability".**
- **Key Pillars: Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability**

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) **Environment**

Context

- The European Commission has proposed expanding the scope of the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** to include around 180 additional products from January 1, 2028.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- **It is a carbon tariff on carbon intensive products, such as cement and some electricity, imported by the European Union.**
- **Significance** - As a price on carbon, it discourages emissions. As a trade-related measure, it affects production and exports.

Operation Numkhor **Miscellaneous**

Context

- **Operation Numkhor, a nationwide crackdown on vehicle smuggling and forged registration rackets, is likely to be discussed in the upcoming Indo-Bhutan Joint Customs Group meeting.**

Operation Numkhor

- **Launched by - Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi in September 2025.**
- **Mandate - to uncover a widespread racket involving the smuggling of high-end luxury vehicles from Bhutan.**
- **The operation revealed over 15,000 illegally registered vehicles across India, bypassing heavy customs duties and involving the use of forged documents**

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III **(PMGSY-III)** **Government Initiatives**

Context

- The Union Cabinet has extended the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) beyond March 2025 till 2028–29.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III **(PMGSY-III)**

- **Launched in - 2000**
- **Financing - Centrally Sponsored Scheme,**
- **Implementation - Ministry of Rural Development**
- **Objective** - It is aimed at providing **all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations in rural areas .**

PMGSY has evolved through multiple phases:

- **PMGSY-I (2000)** focused on providing connectivity to unconnected habitations;
- **PMGSY-II (2013)** aimed at upgradation of existing rural roads;
- **PMGSY-III (2019)** focuses on consolidation of rural road networks;

Significance

- The extension will help complete targeted rural road upgradation.
- It improves market access for agricultural and non-farm products while reducing transportation costs.
- It will enhance access to education and healthcare services, particularly in remote areas, and contribute to inclusive growth by bridging the rural–urban divide in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Israel's 'Yellow Line' in Southern Lebanon International



Israel's new 'Yellow Line' in Lebanon

Israeli forces say they have established a "Yellow Line" in southern Lebanon, where entry is prohibited, similar to an Israeli military measure in the besieged Gaza Strip.



Context

- Recently, Israel announced the establishment of a 'Yellow Line' in southern

Lebanon, shortly after a 10-day ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon.

What is the 'Yellow Line'?

- It is a **military demarcation line created by Israel to separate areas of control in a conflict zone.**
- It is a **temporary operational boundary that marks the limit of Israeli troop deployment.**
- A threshold beyond which movement is treated as a potential security threat.

Comparison with Gaza

- A similar line has been used in Gaza since October 2023.
- There, it effectively divided territory between Israeli-controlled areas and Hamas-controlled zones.

India's First Large-Scale Private Gold Mining Project Economy

In News

- The launch of **India's first large-scale private gold mine at Jonnagiri, Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh**, has brought renewed focus on India's gold reserves, production deficit, and the strategic importance of domestic mining.

Gold

- It is a **soft, dense, highly ductile, and corrosion-resistant precious metal** found in nature in its native form.
- **Gold is India's second-largest import after oil**, with nearly 1,000 tonnes imported annually to meet domestic demand.
- **Bihar dominates reserves at ~43%, followed by Rajasthan (~25%) and Karnataka (~20%).**
- **Karnataka accounts for approximately 97% of India's total gold output**, primarily through the **Hutti Gold Mines in Raichur.**

- **China leads global gold production** with approximately 10% of world output, followed by **Russia and Australia**.
- **Switzerland is the world's largest gold importer**.

18th Civil Services Day Governance

Context

- **The 18th Civil Services Day was celebrated on April 21, 2026.**
- This day is observed annually in India to recognize the contributions of civil servants and to allow them to recommit themselves to public service.
- **2026 Theme - Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile".**
- **Significance:** The day (instituted in 2006) honors Sardar Patel's 1947 address to the first IAS batch, where he **dubbed civil servants the "steel frame of India"**.
- **Organiser:** The event is conducted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)

Constitutional Provisions of Civil Services

- **Article 309** empowers Parliament and State Legislatures to **regulate recruitment and conditions of service**.
- **Article 310** of the Constitution states that **civil servants of the Union and the States hold office during the pleasure of the President or the Governor**, respectively.
- **Article 311** provides **safeguards for civil servants against arbitrary dismissal**.
- **Article 312** outlines the process for creating **All India Services, such as the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), and the Indian Forest Service (IFoS)**.
- **Articles 315 to 323** of the Indian Constitution establish **Public Service Commissions**

(PSCs) for both the Union (UPSC) and each state (SPSC).

History of Civil Services in India

- **Lord Cornwallis** is considered as **'Father of Civil Services in India'**.
- **Lord Wellesley** founded the **College of Fort William in Calcutta** in 1800 to educate young recruits for the Civil Services.
- **Note - Satyendranath Tagore was the first Indian to clear ICS in 1864.**

Governance reforms to enhance efficiency of bureaucracy

- **Mission Karmayogi National Program:** It is a flagship programme of Government of India launched in 2020 for training of civil servants.
- **e-Governance Initiatives: Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)** for grievance redressal, SPARROW for performance appraisal, and digitization of service records.

SMILE Scheme Schemes

Context

- The SMILE Scheme is transforming lives across India by promoting inclusive rehabilitation and social reintegration of vulnerable communities.

Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)

- **Launched in - 2022**
- **Implementation - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- **Objective - to support vulnerable groups at every stage**, from identification and rescue to healthcare, rehabilitation, education, counselling, skill development, and long-term economic independence.

Features -

- One of its components was the sub-scheme to identify, profile, and **rehabilitate individuals engaged in the act of begging** with their consent.
- The other component of the scheme is for the **empowerment of transgender persons.**

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary Designated as New Ramsar Sites Environment

Context

- India designated **Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh as its 99th Ramsar Site**, with Uttar Pradesh now having **12th sites on the list.**

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- **Location** - It is a freshwater wetland ecosystem, formed by the **Upper Ganges Canal in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.**
- It is a key habitat for migratory birds on the Central Asian Flyway and wintering ground for species such as **Bar-headed Goose, Painted Stork and various species of ducks and waterfowl.**

India's Latest Additions in Ramsar site

- Siliserh Lake (Rajasthan): 95th Ramsar site
- Kopra Jalashay (Chhattisgarh): 96th Ramsar Sites
- Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh): 97th Ramsar Sites
- Chhari-Dhand Conservation Reserve (Gujarat): 98th Ramsar Sites

Connect with the basics - Ramsar Convention

- A Ramsar site is a **wetland designated as one of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.**
- **Ramsar Convention** - It is one of the inter-governmental accords to preserve the wetlands of international importance.

- It was signed on **February 2, 1971 in Ramsar, Iran and came into force in 1975.**
- India became a signatory to the Ramsar Convention in 1982.

Atal Pension Yojana Schemes

Context

- The **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**, has achieved a historic milestone by surpassing **total gross enrolments of "9 crore"** subscribers on 21st April, 2026.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- It was launched in **2015**
- **Objective** - to provide **old-age income security to workers in the unorganised sector.**
- **Target Group:** Initially available to all **citizens of India between 18 and 40 years of age.**
- **Scheme Features:** APY offers a guaranteed **minimum pension of Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000 per month** starting at age 60, based on contributions.
- **Administering Body:** Administered by **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).**
- **Managed under the National Pension System (NPS) architecture.**
- **Progress:** As of January, 2026, over 8.66 crore subscribers have been enrolled, making APY a cornerstone of India's inclusive social security framework.

The Druzhba Pipeline International



In News

- The resumption of Russian oil transit through the Ukrainian section of the Druzhba pipeline on 22 April 2026 was the decisive factor in unblocking major financial and diplomatic aid for Kyiv.

Druzhba Pipeline,

- It is often called the Friendship Pipeline,
- It is one of the world's longest and largest crude oil pipeline networks.

Key Facts

- **Origin:** It starts in Almet'yevsk, Tatarstan (Russia), collecting crude from Siberia, the Urals, and the Caspian Sea.
- **Historical Context:** Built in the 1960s (operational since 1964) during the Soviet era to supply socialist bloc countries (COMECON).
- **Capacity:** It can transport between 1.2 to 2 million barrels of oil per day.
- **Total Length:** Approximately 4,000 to 5,500 km.

Dolphin Friends Initiative Environment

In News

- The Forest Department, Prayagraj has launched the Dolphin Friends volunteer network.

- **Objective - to strengthen conservation of the Gangetic dolphin** through community participation and river monitoring.

Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista Gangetica*)

Characteristics

- **Functionally blind; relies on echolocation for hunting.**
- **Known as Susu due to the sound it makes while breathing.**
- Exclusively freshwater species, **inhabiting Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.**
- **Threats:** Habitat destruction, pollution and hunting.

conservation Status

- **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- **CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species): Appendix I**
- **CMS (Convention on Migratory Species): Appendix I**
- **IUCN Red List: Endangered**

National & State Recognition

- **Declared India's National Aquatic Animal in 2009.**
- **Recognized as the State Aquatic Animal of Assam.**

Indus River Dolphin (*Platanista minor*)

Characteristics:

- **Functionally blind, navigates using echolocation.**
- **Locally called Bhulan in the region.**
- Found mainly in the Indus River System (Pakistan) with a **small population in India's Beas River.**
- **Threats:** Habitat fragmentation, Restricted range, leading to population isolation.

Conservation Status:

- **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**
- **CITES: Appendix I**
- **IUCN Red List: Endangered.**
- **State Recognition: Declared the State Aquatic Animal of Punjab.**

Do You Know?

- One more species of Dolphin i.e. **Irrawaddy dolphin found in India in Chilika Lake** (Asia's largest brackish water lagoon) in Odisha.
- Unlike the other two species, Irrawaddy dolphins are **not blind and have a bulbous head with no beak.**
- **IUCN Red List Conservation status: Critically Endangered.**



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