

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 18 April 2026



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### National Sahakar Spice Fair - 2026



#### Why in News?

- On April 17, 2026, Gautam Kumar Dak, the Minister of State for Cooperation (Independent Charge), inaugurated the 'National Sahakar Spice Fair - 2026'.



#### Key Points:

- Duration:** April 17 to April 26, 2026.
- Venue:** Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur.
- Organizers:** Department of Cooperation and the Rajasthan State Cooperative Consumer Federation (CONFED).
- Frequency of event:** Held annually since the year 2003.
- Other Important Points:**
  - 150 stalls have been set up at the 2026 edition of the fair.
  - In addition to Rajasthan, cooperative societies from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kashmir, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh are also showcasing and selling their products at the fair.
  - Key products from Rajasthan displayed at the fair include:** Mathania Red Chilies, Coriander from Ramganjmandi and Baran, Cumin and Kasuri Methi from Nagaur, Psyllium (Isabgol) from Jalore, Fennel seeds from Sirohi, Asafoetida (Hing) from Pratapgarh, Carom seeds (Ajwain) from Chittorgarh, Gulkand from Pushkar, Thandai from Nathdwara, Pickles from Bhusawar, Sherbet from Rajsamand, Henna (Mehendi) from Sojat, Mango Papad from Dungarpur, Arhar Dal (Pigeon Pea) from Jhadol, and Papad from Bikaner, among others.

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## Facts for Prelims:

### The Cooperative Movement in Rajasthan:

- The cooperative movement in Rajasthan began in the year 1904 in Ajmer.
- **In Year 1904:** The 'Cooperative Credit Societies Act' was passed by the British Government of India. Subsequently, on October 25, 1905, the state's first cooperative society was established in Bhinai (Ajmer).
- **In Year 1904:** The state's first cooperative agricultural bank was established in Deeg.
- **In Year 1910:** The first Central Cooperative Bank was launched in Ajmer.

### Major Institutions Related to Cooperatives in Rajasthan:

Institution Name	Establishment Year	Headquarters
Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank Limited (Apex Bank)	1953	Jaipur
Rajasthan State Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited (RAJFED)	1957	Jaipur
Rajasthan State Oilseed Producers Cooperative Federation (TILAM Sangh)	1990	Jaipur
Rajasthan Cooperative Institute of Education and Management (RICEM)	1990	Jaipur
Rajasthan Cooperative Dairy Federation Limited (RCDF)	1977	Jaipur
Rajasthan State Cooperative Consumer Federation Limited, Jaipur (CONFED)	1967	Jaipur
Rajasthan State Cooperative Land Development Bank Limited	1957	Jaipur

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## Mukhya Mantri Matritva Poshan Yojana

### Why in News?

- The Mukhya Mantri Matritva Poshan Yojana operated by the Government of Rajasthan—is a significant initiative aimed at strengthening maternal and child nutrition.



## मुख्यमंत्री मातृत्व पोषण योजना (MMMPY)

इस योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य दूसरी बार गर्भवती हुई महिला की स्वास्थ्य एवं पोषण स्थिति में सुधार कर, जन्म के समय शिशुओं में कम वजन और दुर्बलता की घटनाओं को कम करना है।

### Key Points:

- **Implementation:** This scheme is implemented through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme.
- **Former Name:** Indira Gandhi Maternity Nutrition Scheme.
- Operated by the Government of Rajasthan, this is a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)-based scheme.
- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to 'women pregnant with their second child' and to lactating mothers to help fulfill their own nutritional needs as well as those of their infants.

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- Under the scheme, an amount of ₹8,000 (via MMMPY + Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana [PMMVY]) is transferred directly to the beneficiary's bank account upon the birth of a girl child, while ₹6,000 (via MMMPY) is transferred upon the birth of a boy child.

## Facts for Prelims:

### 'Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana' (PMMVY)

- **Launched on:** Initiated by the Central Government on January 1, 2017, as a Centrally Sponsored Maternity Benefit Scheme.
- This scheme is a key component of the Government of India's 'Mission Shakti,' which focuses on women's empowerment.
- **Concerned Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Provisions:** Under this scheme, a woman pregnant with her first child receives ₹5,000 in two installments; additionally, a woman pregnant with her second child receives a lump-sum amount of ₹6,000, provided that the child born is a girl and the vaccination schedule is completed.

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### India's First Chip Fabrication Plant



#### Why in News?

- India's first chip fabrication plant has been notified within the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located in Dholera, Gujarat.



#### Key Points:

- This AI-based semiconductor fabrication facility is to be developed by Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Private Limited.
- Fabrication is a "front-end" process where integrated circuits are created on silicon wafers.

#### Significance -

- Strategic self-reliance

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- Creation of skill-based employment
  - Advancement in the technology sector
  - **Previous Initiatives:** Micron Technology's ATMP (Assembly, Test, Marking, and Packaging) facility and Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing (OSAT) units were launched in Sanand, Gujarat.
  - **Objective:** The Central Government aims to establish a robust semiconductor ecosystem through Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and position India as a global hub for electronics and chip manufacturing.
- SEZ Model-based Development Framework:**
- Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are designated areas within a country where distinct regulations and tax regimes apply to promote trade and investment.
  - This notification follows significant amendments made to the SEZ Rules, 2006, in 2025. These amendments aim to boost investment, foster innovation, and facilitate ease of doing business.
  - **Examples:** The land requirement for establishing an SEZ was reduced from 50 hectares to 10 hectares; goods produced within an SEZ were permitted to be sold domestically within the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) upon payment of applicable duties; and so on.

## World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

### Why in News?

- India has strengthened its cooperation in global anti-doping efforts at the WADA GAIIN Final Conference.



### Key Points:

#### World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA):

- Establishment:** It was established in 1999 as an independent international agency in accordance with the terms of the 'Lausanne Declaration'.
- Headquarters:** Montreal (Canada)
- Objective:** To lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport.
- Governance:** WADA's governance and funding are based on equal partnership between the Sport Movement and the governments of the world.
- Key Initiatives:** The Global Anti-Doping Intelligence and Investigations Network (GAIIN) initiative and the World Anti-Doping Code.

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## Khasi and Garo Languages

### Why in News?

- In addition to English, Meghalaya has accorded the status of official state languages to the indigenous Khasi and Garo languages.

### Key Points:

- These languages may now be used in official government communication.
- Following amendments to state legislation, legislators will be able to participate in discussions and debates in these languages during Assembly sessions.

### About the Khasi and Garo Languages:

- **Khasi:** A member of the Khasi branch of the Mon-Khmer family, which is part of the Austroasiatic language family.
- **Garo:** One of the most prominent languages of the Garo Hills districts of Meghalaya, belonging to one of the Bodo groups within the Sino-Tibetan language family.
- **Note:** Neither of these languages is currently included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

## Shahtoosh Wool

### Why in News?

- A Delhi court has convicted the owner of a Jaipur-based art gallery for attempting to illegally export Shahtoosh shawls.

### Key Points:

- Shahtoosh wool is obtained from the hair of the Tibetan antelope (Chiru). The animal is killed to procure this wool.
- The trade of Shahtoosh is completely banned in India and is also prohibited globally.



### Tibetan Antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

- The Chiru is a medium-sized bovid (a member of the cattle family) found in the high-altitude alpine steppe regions of the Tibetan Plateau (3,250–5,500 meters).

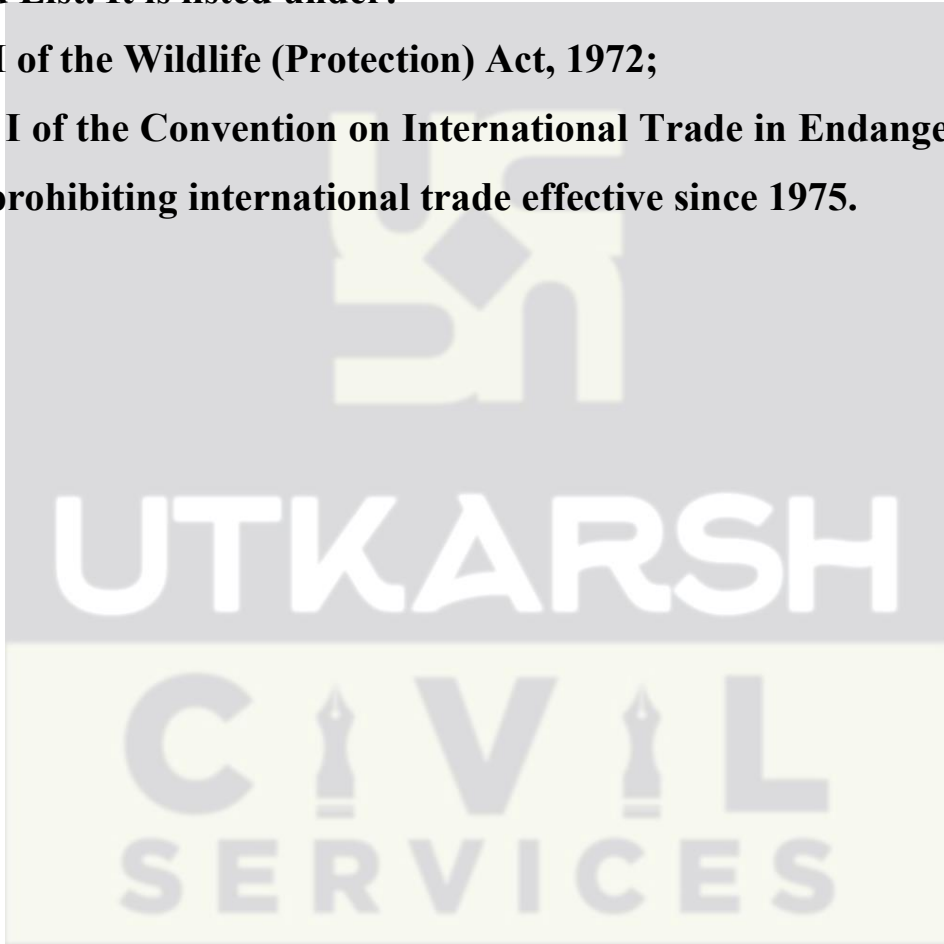
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- **Habitat:** They inhabit the arid, cold grasslands of Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang in China, and a small population is also found in Ladakh (Changthang region) in India.
- **Conservation Status:** It is currently classified as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List. It is listed under:
  - Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972;
  - Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) prohibiting international trade effective since 1975.



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## Operation Numkhor



### Key Points:

- **Operation Numkhor**—a nationwide crackdown on vehicle smuggling and fraudulent registration rackets—is likely to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the India-Bhutan Joint Customs Group.

### Operation Numkhor

- It was launched in September 2025 by the Kochi-based Office of the Commissioner of Customs (Preventive).
- This campaign targets the smuggling of premium second-hand vehicles via Bhutan and the use of forged registration documents, a racket in which officials from the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) are allegedly involved.



## Economic Developments

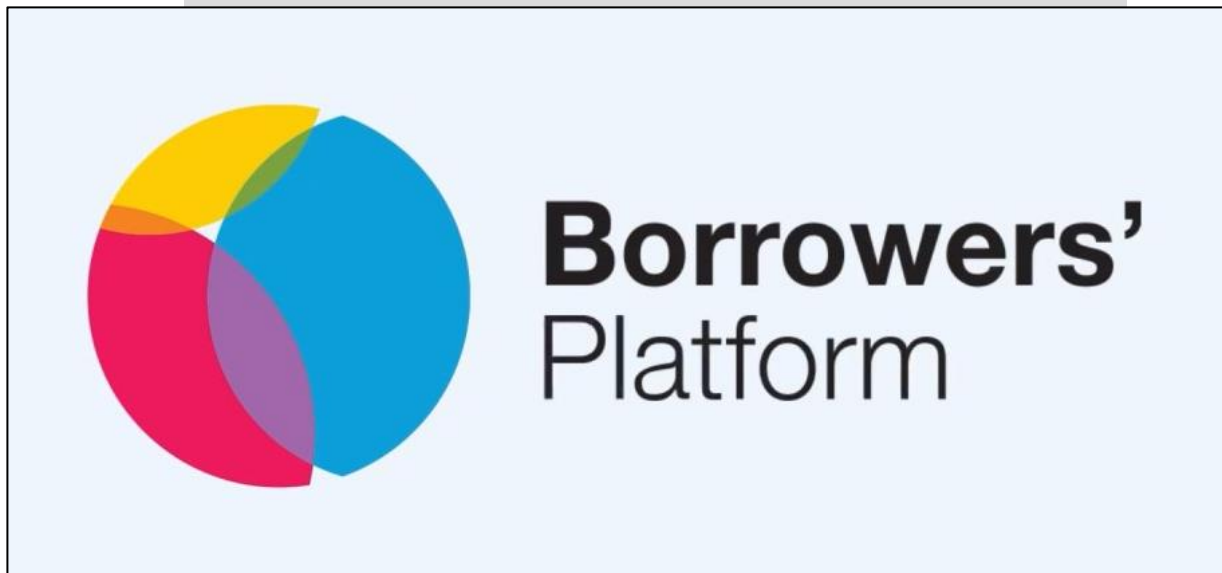


### Borrowers' Platform



#### Why in News?

- Recently, developing countries launched the 'Borrowers' Platform' for the first time at the 2026 IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings.



#### Key Points:

##### Borrowers' Platform:

- Objective:** It is a dedicated platform for peer learning and capacity building in debt management. It serves to strengthen the voice of borrowers in sovereign debt agreements.
- It is not a debt restructuring platform.
- Members:** 30 founding members (including India); Chair—Egypt.
- Secretariat:** United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- Significance:** It provides a formal coordination mechanism for borrowers whose external debt reached \$11.7 trillion in 2024.
- Sovereign debt agreements have long been dominated by lender-led mechanisms. The Paris Club is a prime example of this.

## National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW)

### Why in News?

- Recent unrest among factory workers has accelerated efforts to finalize the national minimum wage level specifically, the National Floor Level Minimum Wage.

### Key Points:

#### National Floor Level Minimum Wage:

- **Introduction:** This concept first came into discussion in 1991 and is linked to the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL), chaired by Mr. Jinabhai Darji.
- It was introduced on a voluntary basis to reduce disparities in minimum wages across the country. It represents an effort toward establishing a uniform wage structure.
- Currently, the Code on Wages (2019) empowers the Central Government to determine the floor wage.
- Consequently, the "appropriate governments" (both Central and State) are required to fix minimum wages at a level above this floor wage, based on factors such as skill, sector, occupation, or other local conditions.

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### Report on the Status of Bats in India (2024–25)

#### Why in News?

- The first-ever assessment of bats in India highlights the threats facing them as well as key data-related challenges.



#### Key Points:

- This report has been prepared by the Nature Conservation Foundation, Bat Conservation International, and others.

#### Key Highlights of the Report:

- **Species Diversity:** Approximately 135 bat species have been recorded. Of these, 16 species are endemic.
- Seven species have been listed by the IUCN under 'Threatened' categories.
- **Threats:** Urbanization, deforestation, climate change, and the stigma of being the source of COVID-19, constitute the primary threats.

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## ⌚ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ⌚

### AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG)

#### 📣 Why in News?

- To spearhead India's national AI governance strategy, the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has constituted the 'AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG).'

#### 📌 Key Points:

- Through this initiative, India's AI governance guidelines—along with recommendations made in the Economic Survey—have been formalized.
- The guidelines emphasize a "whole-of-government" approach toward AI governance.
- **AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG)** -This is a high-level inter-ministerial body. It will serve as India's central institutional mechanism for policy formulation on AI governance and for fostering coordination among various organizations.

#### Structure (10-member body):

- **Chairperson:** Union Minister of Electronics and IT
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT
- **Other Members:** Stakeholders associated with policy formulation, science and technology, security, and economic affairs. Examples include: the Principal Scientific Advisor, the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA), the CEO of NITI Aayog, etc.
- **Expert Support:** Provided by a Technology and Policy Expert Committee (TPEC), which will offer technical advice regarding global trends, emerging threats, and regulatory gaps.

## India's AI Governance Strategy

- **NITI Aayog's 'National AI Strategy (2018)'**: Emphasizes the democratization of AI systems through initiatives such as the 'AI for All' approach, inclusive growth, and the IndiaAI Mission.
- **Seven Principles or Sutras**: Trust, Human-centricity, Responsible Innovation, Equity, Accountability, Prudence, and Security, Resilience, and Sustainability.
- **Integration with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**, and the establishment of institutional frameworks such as the AI Governance Group.

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## INDEXES AND REPORTS



### Indian Space Situational Awareness Report, 2025 (ISSAR 2025)



#### Why in News?

- The 'Indian Space Situational Awareness Report' has been released by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It serves as an annual assessment of the current state of space.



#### Key Points:

- **Record Number of Launches:** In 2025, out of 328 launched missions, 315 were successful. These missions deployed 4,198 known operational satellites.
- **Growing Interest in Lunar Exploration:** Four lunar missions were launched in 2025. All of these were launched by private entities.
- The Blue Ghost Mission 1 became the first spacecraft from the private sector to successfully execute a soft landing on the Moon.
- **Increased Satellite Congestion and Risks in Space:** Approximately 160,000 alerts regarding close approaches between satellites were issued, highlighting the high density of satellites, particularly in Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

#### Space Landscape for India (As of End-2025)

- **Spacecraft:** By the end of 2025, a total of 144 spacecraft had been launched from India, including launches by private operators and academic institutions.
- The GSLV-F15/NVS-02 mission, launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, marked the 100th launch of an Indian spacecraft.

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- The number of government-owned operational satellites stood at 22 in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and 31 in Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO).
- **Active Deep Space Missions:** Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter (CH2O) and Aditya-L1.
- **Major Achievements:** The SpaDeX mission; and a visit to the International Space Station by Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, while commanding the private Axiom 4 crew mission.

## ISRO's Efforts to Maintain the Smooth Operation of Satellites in Space

- **Commitment to Debris-Free Space Missions (DFSM):** All stakeholders associated with the space sector announced in 2024 that they would ensure debris-free space missions by the year 2030.
- **Indigenous Initiatives:** The Network for Space Objects Tracking and Analysis (NETRA); the establishment of the Multi-Object Tracking Radar (MOTR) at Sriharikota; and the Baker-Nunn Schmidt Telescope (BNST), which is currently undergoing refurbishment in Nainital.
- **Participation in Global Forums:** These include the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, the IAA Space Debris Committee, among others.

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## World Economic Outlook (WEO)

### Why in News?

- In its latest WEO report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slightly raised India's GDP growth forecast for the fiscal year 2027 to 6.5%.



### Key Points:

- The global growth rate is projected to slow to 3.1% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027.
- In terms of nominal GDP, India has moved out of the top five global economies to become the sixth-largest economy in the world. The top spots are held by the US, China, Germany, Japan, and the UK.

### WEO:

- It presents an analysis and forecasts of the global economy in the near and medium term.
- It is published twice a year, with updates released in between.
- **Other reports published by the IMF:** Global Financial Stability Report, Fiscal Monitor.