

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 April 2026



## Index

Sr. No.	Topic
1.	Tripartite MoUs Regarding Downstream Products in the Rajasthan Petro Zone
2.	Survey on the 'Conservation of Ancient Texts and Manuscripts' in Rajasthan
3.	Revenue Target of the Rajasthan Department of Mines for the Year 2026-27
4.	Kaylana Lake: Being Developed as a World-Class Eco-Tourism Hub
5.	Shri Annapurna Rasoi Yojana (Rural)
6.	News in Shorts 1. Lord Parashurama Jayanti (State-Level Celebration) 2. Sanitation Service Marathon-2026: Jaipur 3. Observation of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly by 43 Participants from 17 Countries 4. Dr. Shubhabrata Mukhopadhyay 5. All India Inter-University Handball (Men) Championship 2025-26
7.	Hanging Glaciers
8.	India Ranks Sixth in the Global Economy
9.	Constitution (131st) Amendment Bill, 2026
10.	Nominated Members
11.	Bharat Industrial Development Scheme (BHAVYA)
12.	River Basin Management (RBM) Scheme Extended for the Next 5 Years
13.	Flexibility and Logistics Interventions for Export Facilitation (RELIEF)
14.	Scarborough Shoal
15.	Phytoremediation
16.	National Chambal Ghariyal Wildlife Sanctuary
17.	Biological Diversity Act (BDA), 2002

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### Tripartite MoUs Regarding Downstream Products in the Rajasthan Petro Zone



#### Why in News?

- Recently, 18 tripartite Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the HPCL Refinery, the Rajasthan Department of Industries and Commerce, and various industrial entities to ensure the supply of downstream products to industrial units located within the Rajasthan Petro Zone in Pachpadra (Balotra).



#### Key Points:

- This initiative will boost the establishment of new petrochemical-based industries in the state, thereby accelerating production and fostering ancillary industries across various sectors, including pharmaceuticals and automobiles.

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- **Downstream Products:** In the context of a refinery, downstream products are finished, marketable commodities produced through the processing of crude oil and natural gas. These products can be broadly categorized into two groups: fuel products and petrochemical products.

## Major Downstream Products:

- **Transportation Fuels:** Gasoline/Petrol, diesel oil, aviation jet fuel, and heating oil.
- **Petrochemicals:** Naphtha, ethylene, propylene, and benzene—which are used in the manufacturing of plastics, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and synthetic rubber.
- **Industrial Products:** Lubricants, waxes, asphalt (bitumen), and petroleum coke.
- **Natural Gas Products:** Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), ethane, propane, and butane.

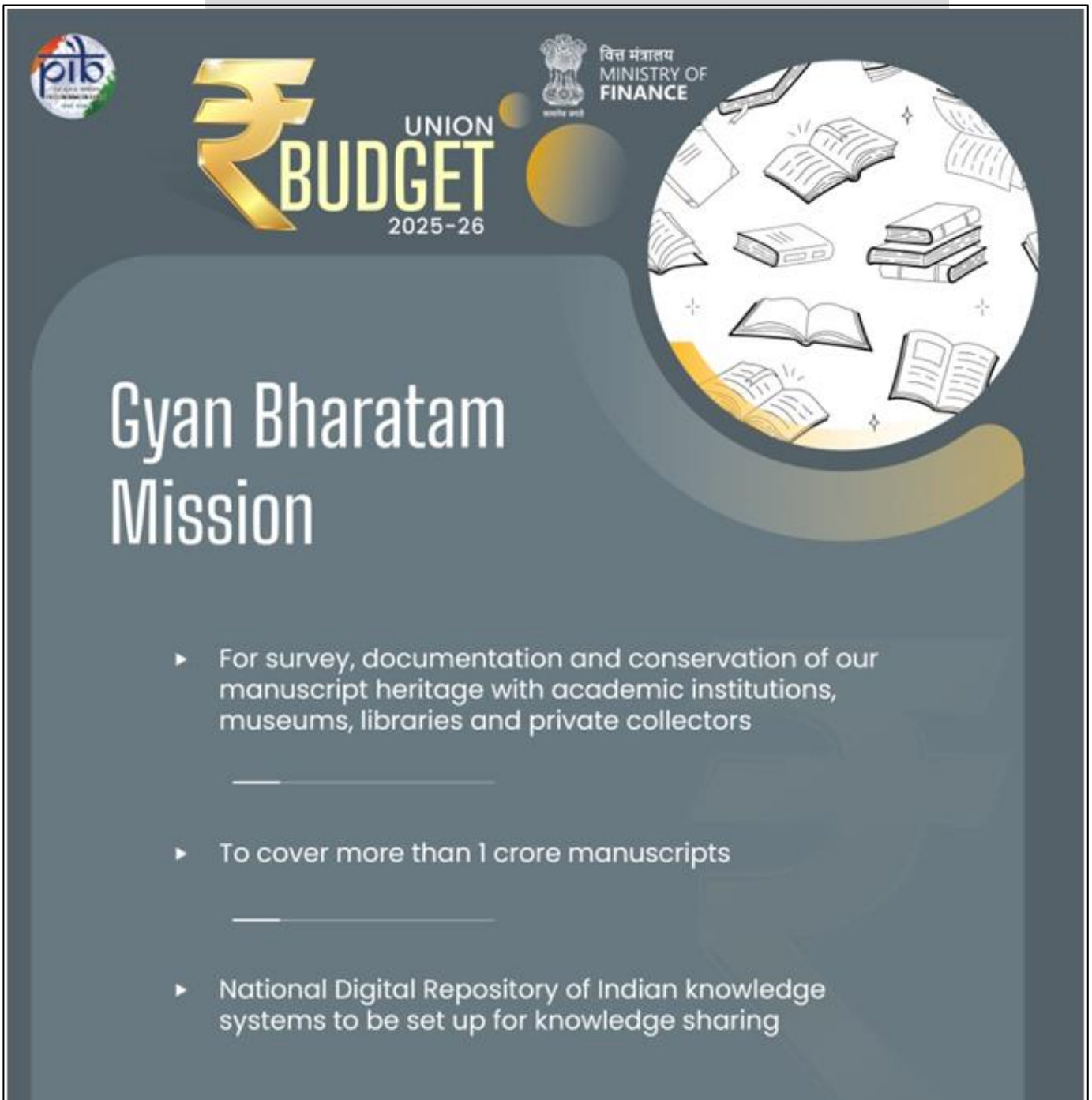
## Other Important Points:

- It is noteworthy that the ‘Rajasthan Petro Zone (RPZ)’ has been developed in close proximity to the refinery to facilitate the establishment of ancillary industries based on the downstream products generated by the refinery. This arrangement will enable entrepreneurs to procure raw materials directly from the refinery, resulting in a significant reduction in their operational costs.
- Located 12 kilometers away from the Pachpadra Refinery, the Rajasthan Petro Zone is well-connected to the Amritsar-Jamnagar Expressway and National Highway (NH) 25.

## Survey on the 'Conservation of Ancient Texts and Manuscripts' in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

- Rajasthan ranks first nationwide in the survey and digitization of manuscripts under the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission'.



The infographic features the Pib logo, the Union Budget 2025-26 title with a large Rupee symbol, and the Ministry of Finance logo. A circular graphic contains illustrations of books and manuscripts. The mission name 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' is prominently displayed.

**Union Budget 2025-26**

**Gyan Bharatam Mission**

- ▶ For survey, documentation and conservation of our manuscript heritage with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors
- ▶ To cover more than 1 crore manuscripts
- ▶ National Digital Repository of Indian knowledge systems to be set up for knowledge sharing

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## Key Points:

- The state achieved this milestone by surveying over 15.31 lakh ancient texts between March 16 and March 26, 2026. Approximately 25 percent of the country's total manuscripts are housed in Rajasthan. A total of 1,381,009 manuscripts have been registered within the state.
- A comprehensive campaign for the survey and conservation of ancient texts and manuscripts was launched in Rajasthan on March 16, 2026.
- This initiative is being implemented under the Government of India's 'Gyan Bharatam Mission'.
- As part of this statewide survey, the State Department of Tourism, Art, Literature, Culture, and Archaeology will conduct a survey to identify and catalog ancient texts and manuscripts across the region.
- **Mission Objective:** To create a high-quality digital database of rare manuscripts to ensure their preservation for the future.
- **State Nodal Officer for the Rajasthan Manuscript Survey:** Dr. Lata Shrimali, Director of the Rajasthan Sanskrit Academy.
- **Main Cluster Center:** Under the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' in Rajasthan, the Rajasthan Sanskrit Academy (Jaipur) has been designated as the state's main cluster center for the conservation and scientific study of manuscripts.
- **Note:** The Abhay Jain Granthalaya (Library), located in Bikaner, has been declared Rajasthan's first official manuscript conservation center.

## Facts for Prelims:

- **Gyan Bharatam Mission:** A flagship initiative of the Union Ministry of Culture, announced during the Union Budget 2025-26. Its primary objective is the survey, documentation, conservation, and digitization of India's vast handwritten heritage (manuscripts).
- To revive India's knowledge heritage, the 'First Gyan Bharatam International Conference' was organized at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, from September 11 to 13, 2025.

## Revenue Target of the Rajasthan Department of Mines for the Year 2026-27

### Why in News?

- Recently, the Rajasthan Department of Mines set its latest revenue collection target for the year 2026-27.

Government of Rajasthan  
Mines Department  
Rajasthan

खनिज संपदा  
समृद्ध राजस्थान

## Rajasthan Mines Department's REVENUE TARGET

FOR 2026-27

REVENUE TARGET  
**₹14,001**  
CRORE

DRIVEN BY

- Sustainable Mining Growth**  
Promoting responsible and sustainable mining
- Transparent & Efficient Systems**  
Strengthening transparency, compliance and e-governance
- Ease of Doing Business**  
Facilitating investor-friendly policies and processes
- Optimized Resource Utilization**  
Maximizing the value of mineral resources
- Inclusive Growth for Rajasthan**  
Contributing to employment, infrastructure and overall development

Strengthening Minerals. Enriching Rajasthan.

### Key Points:

- Latest Target:** ₹14,001 crore, representing a 39 percent increase compared to the previous financial year.
- Collection in FY 2025-26:** ₹10,394 crore, reflecting a growth rate of 13 percent.

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## Other Important Points:

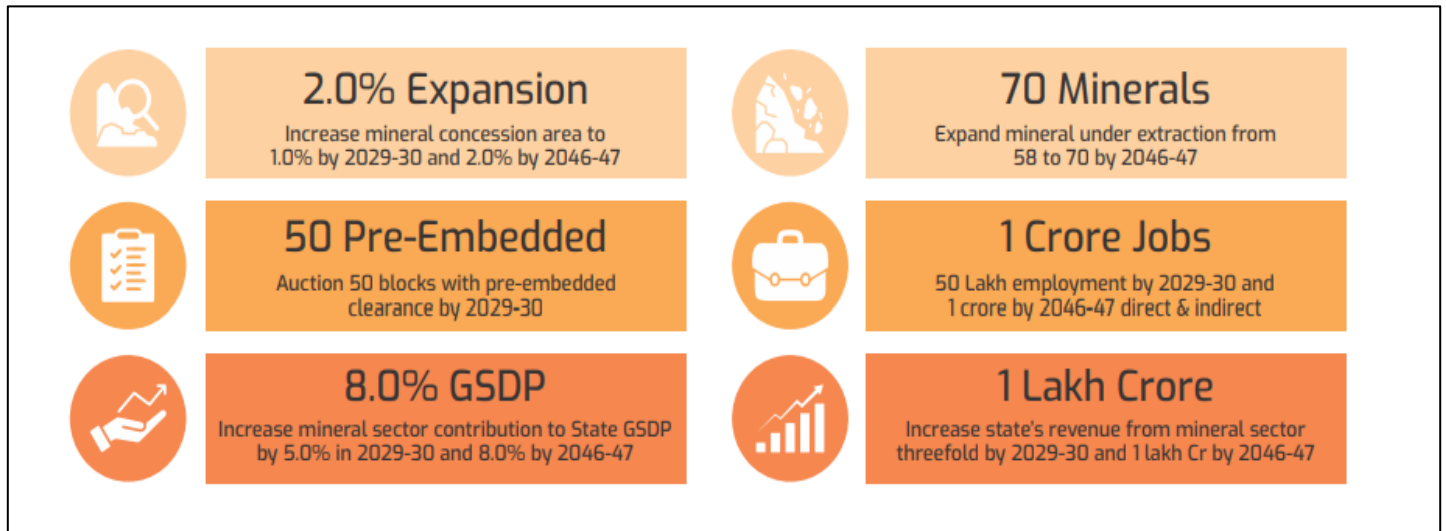
- **Auction of Pre-embedded Blocks:** Rajasthan is the first state in the country to auction 'pre-embedded blocks.' The process of auctioning mineral blocks—wherein necessary permits are secured before the actual auction takes place—is known as 'Pre-embedded Clearance.'
- **Mineral Vehicle Tracking System:** The Rajasthan Department of Mines has made the 'Mineral Vehicle Tracking System' mandatory across the entire state, effective from January 1, 2026.
- **E-Ravanna:** E-Ravanna is an electronic system (app) launched by the Government of Rajasthan to enhance transparency in mineral transportation, curb royalty evasion, and address the issue of vehicle overloading. Since October 31, 2017, the issuance of manual (physical) Ravannas has been completely prohibited for all types of mineral transportation, with the exception of specific cases involving gravel and gypsum.

## Facts for Prelims (Economic Review – 2025-26)

### The Mining Sector in Rajasthan:

- In terms of mineral resources, Rajasthan is one of the richest states in India; it possesses reserves of 81 different types of minerals, 58 of which are currently being mined.
- Rajasthan is the sole producing state in the country for Lead-Zinc ore, Selenite, and Wollastonite, while also holding a leading position nationally in the production of Silver, Calcite, and Gypsum.
- Rajasthan ranks at the top in the national production of Ball Clay, Phosphorite, Ochre, Steatite, Feldspar, and Fire Clay.
- Rajasthan is a leading producer state of dimensional stones—such as Marble, Sandstone, and Granite—as well as cement-grade and steel-grade Limestone.

## Rajasthan Mineral Policy – 2024



- **Issued on:** December 04, 2024.
- The objective of the Rajasthan Mineral Policy – 2024 is to promote sustainable, transparent, and responsible mineral development by leveraging the state's abundant mineral resources for economic growth, while simultaneously ensuring environmental conservation and community welfare.

### Key Features:

- **Economic Growth and Investment:** Promoting mineral-based industries, attracting investment, and enhancing the sector's contribution to the State Gross Domestic Product (GSDP).
- **Employment Generation:** Providing employment opportunities—both directly and indirectly—to over 10 million people by the year 2047.
- **Sustainability and ESG Compliance:** Implementing zero-waste mining practices, eco-friendly technologies, and waste management strategies.
- **Technology Integration:** Ensuring transparency by adopting advanced exploration techniques, AI-based monitoring, and digital governance.
- **Illegal Mining Mitigation:** Curbing illegal activities through the use of GPS-based tracking, geo-fencing, and real-time monitoring.

--8:--

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 April 2026



## Key Initiatives:

- Increasing the number of mineral extraction operations from 58 to 70 by the year 2047.
- Auctioning of 50 major mineral blocks with pre-determined approvals.
- Expanding the mining concession area to cover 2 percent of the state's total land area by the year 2047.
- Promoting strategic and critical minerals (such as Lithium and Rare Earth Elements) in support of clean energy initiatives.
- Establishing a State Mining Company to facilitate value addition and research in mineral resources.

## Other Important Points:

### Rajasthan State Mineral Exploration Trust (RSMET)

- **Formation:** In the year 2020.
- **Objective:** To ensure the efficient management and monitoring of activities related to the scientific exploration of mineral deposits available in Rajasthan, the utilization of modern technology in mining, research, studies, skill development, and revenue enhancement.

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## Kaylana Lake: Being Developed as a World-Class Eco-Tourism Hub

### Why in News?

- Kaylana Lake, located in Jodhpur, is being developed as a world-class eco-tourism hub under a master plan prepared by experts from South Korea and Singapore.



### Key Points:

- Recently, the State Government included the beautification of Kaylana Lake in the 5th phase of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) project.
- **Another name for Kaylana Lake:** Sir Pratap Sagar Lake.
- **Construction:** Built in 1872 AD by Sir Pratap Singh.
- Kaylana is the first lake in Rajasthan to be connected to the Indira Gandhi Canal Project (IGNP).

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# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 April 2026



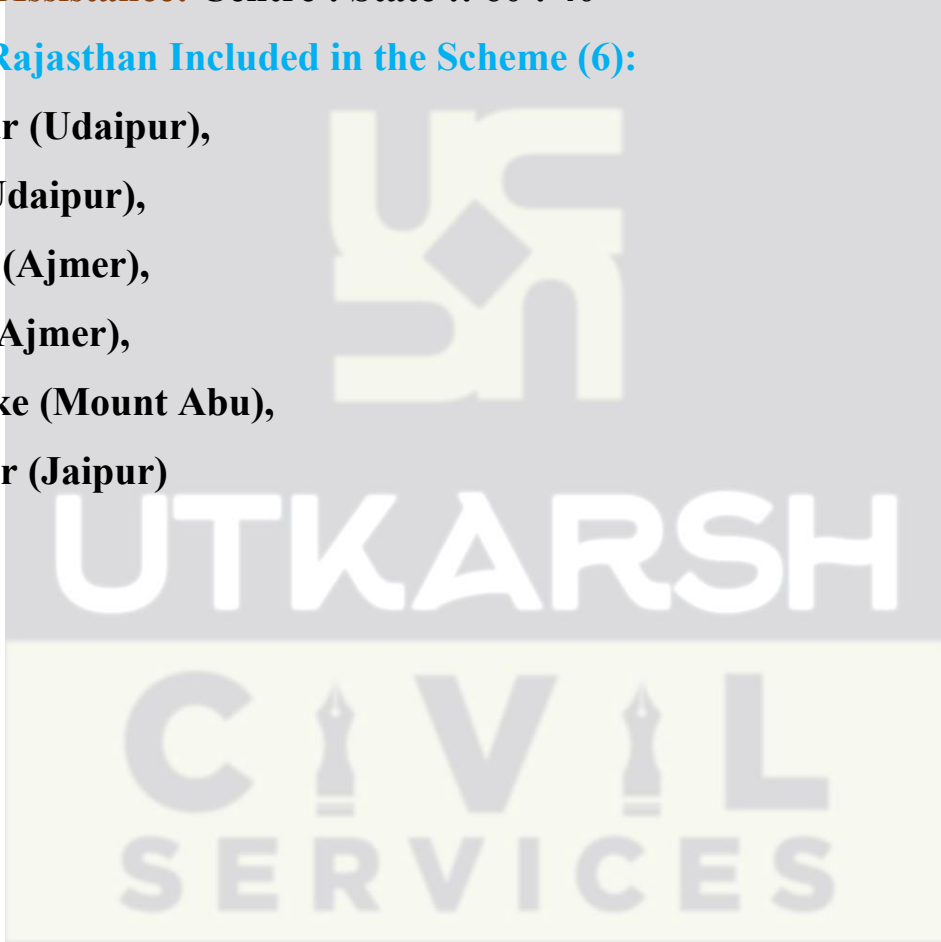
- This lake serves as the source of drinking water supply for the city of Jodhpur.
- Machiya Safari (Deer Park) is situated in the vicinity of this lake.

## **Facts for Prelims (Rajasthan Lake Conservation Scheme):**

- **Initiation:** Year 2001.
- **Financial Assistance:** Centre : State :: 60 : 40

## **Lakes of Rajasthan Included in the Scheme (6):**

- Fatehsagar (Udaipur),
- Pichola (Udaipur),
- Anasagar (Ajmer),
- Pushkar (Ajmer),
- Nakki Lake (Mount Abu),
- Man Sagar (Jaipur)



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## Shri Annapurna Rasoi Yojana (Rural)

### Why in News?

- As of April 20, 2026, the 'Shri Annapurna Rasoi Yojana (Rural)' is being implemented across various rural areas of Rajasthan through '810 kitchens' (Rasois).

श्री अन्नपूर्णा रसोई योजना  
(ग्रामीण)

8 रुपये में

सम्मान के साथ शुद्ध व पौष्टिक भोजन

थाली में 300 ग्राम चपाती,  
100 ग्राम दाल, 100 ग्राम सब्जी,  
100 ग्राम चावल/  
बाजरा खिचड़ी और अचार

RajGovOfficial

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# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 April 2026



## Key Points:

- Under this scheme, more than 24 million (2.4 crore) thalis (meals) were served between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026.

## About the Scheme:

- **Launch:** Commenced on January 6, 2024, in designated rural towns across the state.
- Through this scheme, nutritious and wholesome food tailored to local tastes is being made available at affordable rates.
- **Implementation:** Executed by Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across all designated rural towns of the state, under the aegis of the Rajasthan Rural Livelihoods Development Council (Rajeevika).
- **Availability:** Under the scheme, lunch and dinner are provided through 810 kitchens; the provision allows for each kitchen in the rural towns to serve a maximum of 100 lunches and 100 dinners daily.
- **Pricing:** Beneficiaries are charged ₹8 per thali, while the State Government contributes a subsidy of ₹22 per thali.
- Each beneficiary is served a thali containing 600 grams of food (comprising 300 grams of chapatis, 100 grams of dal [lentils], 100 grams of vegetables, 100 grams of rice/millet khichdi, and pickles).

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## ✂ NEWS IN SHORTS ⚡

S. No.	News
1.	<p><b>Lord Parashurama Jayanti (State-Level Celebration)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lord Parashurama Jayanti is celebrated annually on Vaishakh Shukla Tritiya.</li><li><b>State-Level Celebration:</b> Held at the Birla Auditorium, Jaipur, under the chairmanship of Governor Haribhau Bagde.</li></ul>
2.	<p><b>Sanitation Service Marathon-2026: Jaipur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On April 18, 2026, the largest-ever 'Sanitation Service Marathon-2026' was organized in Jaipur.</li><li>Under this campaign, a record 6,000 tons of waste was collected in a single day—double the city's daily average (approximately 2,000–3,000 tons).</li></ul>
3.	<p><b>Observation of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly by 43 Participants from 17 Countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On April 18, 2026, a significant international event was held at the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, during which 43 participants from 17 countries observed the Assembly's functioning.</li><li>This visit was part of the 37th International Legislative Drafting Training Programme, organized by the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) of the Lok Sabha Secretariat.</li><li>Participants from 17 countries—including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ghana, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Zambia—took part in this international programme.</li></ul>

4.

## **Dr. Shubhabrata Mukhopadhyay**

- Recently, Dr. Shubhabrata Mukhopadhyay, a resident of Jaipur, created an extraordinary painting titled "Jaipur: A Royal Dreamscape," for which his name has been entered into the India Book of Records.
- This painting was created using acrylic colors on a tracing film roll.

5.

## **All India Inter-University Handball (Men) Championship 2025-26**

- The All India Inter-University Handball (Men) Championship 2025-26 was organized at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, from April 21 to 25, 2026.

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## Geography and Geology

### Hanging Glaciers

#### Why in News?

- A new research study has identified 219 such hanging glaciers in the Alaknanda Basin of Uttarakhand that contain a significant volume of unstable ice and pose a risk of generating avalanches.



#### Key Points:

##### Hanging Glaciers:

- Hanging glaciers are types of glaciers that, instead of extending down to the valley floor, terminate at a cliff edge or on a steep slope.
- **Process of Movement:** Valley glaciers flow gradually, whereas hanging glaciers replenish the ice below primarily through icefalls and avalanches.
- **Threat:** These glaciers are inherently unstable and prone to sudden detachment and collapse events, which can impact glacial lakes (posing a risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods—GLOF) or obstruct river flow.

## Economic Developments

### India Ranks Sixth in the Global Economy

#### Why in News?

- According to the latest World Economic Outlook released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India has become the world's sixth-largest economy in terms of nominal GDP.



#### Key Points:

- India's GDP is projected to reach \$4.15 trillion in 2026, placing it behind the United Kingdom and Japan.

#### How Global GDP Rankings Are Calculated

- The IMF ranks economies based on nominal GDP denominated in US dollars.
- This calculation relies on the GDP measured in local currency and the prevailing exchange rate against the US dollar.
- Any adverse shift in these factors can impact the rankings, even if real economic growth remains robust.

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Rank	Country	GDP (USD trillion approx)
1	United States	30.8
2	China	19.6
3	Germany	4.7
4	Japan	4.4
5	United Kingdom	4.0-4.3
6	India	3.9-4.2

## Reasons for the Decline in India's Ranking

- **Revision of GDP Estimates:** India has revised its GDP series, adopting 2026 as the new base year.
- The nominal GDP for the fiscal year 2025-26 has been lowered from ₹357 lakh crore to ₹345 lakh crore.
- Due to this revision, India's GDP—when denominated in dollars—declined from approximately \$4.1 trillion to \$3.9 trillion.
- **Depreciation of the Indian Rupee:** Over the past year, the Indian Rupee has depreciated significantly against the US dollar.
- Since GDP rankings are calculated in dollar terms, currency depreciation effectively reduces India's relative economic size.
- **Exchange Rate Disparities:** The British Pound and the Japanese Yen strengthened against the Rupee, thereby widening the gap between India and economies such as the United Kingdom and Japan.
- Consequently, both these nations surpassed India in the rankings, despite experiencing only marginal—or even declining—growth within their own economies.
- **Tight Cluster of Major Economies:** Following the United States and China, the next four largest economies are clustered closely around the \$4 trillion mark. Even minor fluctuations in statistical data or exchange rates can easily alter the rankings within this group.

## Implications of Changes in Rankings

- **Limited Impact on Economic Fundamentals:** A decline in global rankings does not indicate any structural weakness within the Indian economy.
- India's growth momentum remains robust, as reflected in the projected real GDP growth of 7.4% for FY2026 (domestic estimates) and the 6.5% projected by the International Monetary Fund for FY2027.
- **Impact on Perception and Global Standing:** Global GDP rankings play a significant role in shaping investor sentiment and international confidence.
- A lower ranking may create a temporary perception of an economic slowdown, even if underlying fundamentals remain stable.
- **Delay in Strategic Economic Achievements:** India's journey toward becoming one of the world's top three economies may take longer than previously anticipated.
- It is projected that India will surpass Germany by 2031, thereby becoming the world's third-largest economy.

GDP, current prices (Billions of U.S. dollars)	Germany	Japan	United Kingdom	India
2019	3,960	5,246	2,877	2,776
2020	3,938	5,189	2,726	2,612
2021	4,358	5,226	3,195	3,085
2022	4,204	4,448	3,193	3,250
2023	4,564	4,385	3,422	3,501
2024	4,684	4,190	3,695	3,761
2025	5,048	4,435	4,003	3,916
2026	<b>5,453</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>4,153</b>
2027	5,642	4,562	4,466	4,579
2028	5,819	4,744	4,675	5,059
2029	6,003	4,873	4,898	5,599
2030	6,178	5,002	5,148	6,173
2031	6,352	5,128	5,403	6,792

Source: IMF

## Key Economic Concepts

### Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

- GDP represents the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's domestic boundaries during a specific period (typically a quarter or a year).
- The current base year is 2022-23 (updated in 2026; prior to this, it was 2011-12).
- **Issuing Authority:** National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

### Nominal GDP vs. Real GDP

- Nominal GDP measures a country's economic output at current market prices; it incorporates the effects of inflation and is useful for assessing the size of the economy in terms of current value.
- Real GDP adjusts for inflation by valuing output at constant base-year prices, thereby providing a more accurate measure of the actual growth in output over time.

### What is a Base Year?

- A base year is a standard reference year used for comparative purposes in economic and statistical calculations.
- It provides a reference point against which the current values of indicators such as GDP, CPI, and IIP are measured, enabling the tracking of real changes over time.

### Significance:

- It helps us strip away the impact of inflation and observe actual growth.
- It ensures that the data reflects the economy's current structure, consumption patterns, and prices.

## 🎓 Indian Governance and State System 🎓

### Constitution (131st) Amendment Bill, 2026

#### 📢 Why in News?

- The Constitution (131st) Amendment Bill, 2026, failed to pass in the Lok Sabha. The Bill failed to secure the two-thirds (2/3) majority required for a constitutional amendment.



#### 📌 Key Points:

- Following its failure to pass the Constitutional Amendment Bill, the Central Government withdrew the Delimitation Bill, 2026, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

- This Bill faced opposition because, based on the 2011 Census, it could have potentially reduced the representation of Southern and Northeastern states in the Lok Sabha.

## The 131st Constitution Amendment Bill

- **Increase in the Number of Lok Sabha Members:** It proposed to increase the number of members from the current 543 to 850 (comprising 815 from the States and 35 from the Union Territories).
- **Proposed Amendment to Article 334A:** It proposed that the one-third (1/3) reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies would come into effect immediately after the delimitation exercise.
- A provision for one-third reservation for women has already been made through the 106th Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam).
- **Proposed Amendment to Article 82:** The Bill proposed the removal of the third proviso to Article 82. This proviso of Article 82 mandates that the next delimitation exercise shall be conducted based on the first census held after the year 2026.
- Following the amendment, it would have become possible to conduct the delimitation exercise using census data available prior to the 2026-27 Census.

## Delimitation Bill, 2026

- Its objective was to repeal and replace the Delimitation Act, 2002.
- **Delimitation Commission:** The Central Government would constitute a Delimitation Commission, to be presided over by a sitting or retired Judge of the Supreme Court.
- It was stipulated therein that the delimitation exercise would be based on the latest published census available at the time of the constitution of the Delimitation Commission, implying that the 2011 Census would be utilized.

## Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026

- Under this Bill, it was proposed to implement the aforementioned changes in Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu & Kashmir.

## Procedure for Constitutional Amendment (Under Article 368)

- **Initiation:** The process for amending the Constitution may be initiated by introducing a Bill in either House of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha).
- **Requirement of Special Majority:** Certain amendment Bills must be passed by a majority of the total membership of each House, as well as by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.
- **Ratification by States:** For amendment Bills affecting federal provisions, the approval of the legislatures of at least half of the States is required.

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## Nominated Members

### Why in News?

- For the first time, a nominated member has been elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for a third consecutive term.

### Key Points:

#### Deputy Chairman:

- Under Article 89 of the Constitution, the Deputy Chairman is elected by the Rajya Sabha from amongst its own members.
- When the office of the Chairman is vacant, or when the Vice-President acts as the President, the Deputy Chairman discharges the duties of the Chairman.

#### About Nominated Members

- Under Article 80 of the Constitution, the Rajya Sabha can have up to 250 members. This includes 12 members nominated by the President.
- Members are nominated from fields such as literature, science, art, and social service.

#### Powers and Functions:

- They can fully participate in debates and discussions.
- They cannot vote in the Presidential election.
- They can vote in the Vice-Presidential election.
- They may join a political party within 6 months of taking their seat.
- To date, no nominated member has been a part of the Council of Ministers.

## Schemes and Policies

### Bharat Industrial Development Scheme (BHAVYA)

#### Why in News?

- The Central Government has notified the Bharat Industrial Development Scheme (BHAVYA).

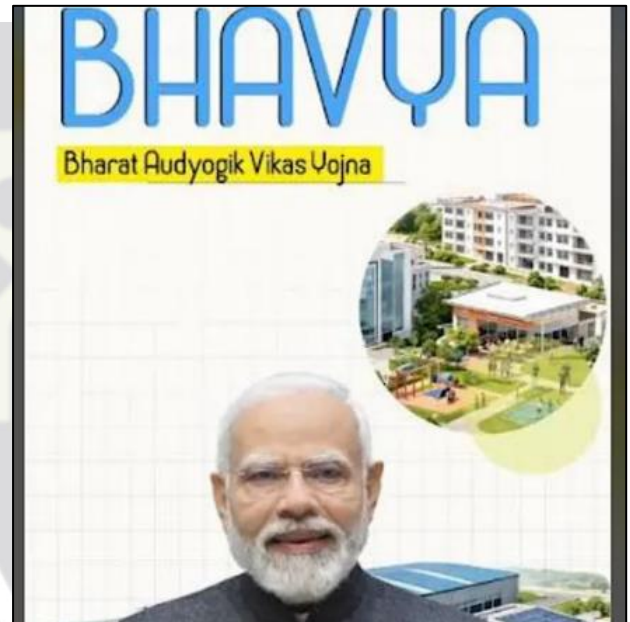
#### Key Points:

##### Features of the BHAVYA Scheme:

- **Nodal Ministry:** Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry (through the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade).
- **Objective:** To develop 100 investment-ready 'Plug-and-Play' industrial parks in partnership with States, Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and the private sector.
- Plug-and-Play Industrial Parks are ready-to-use manufacturing sites where infrastructure—such as roads, electricity, and water—along with necessary approvals, are already in place, enabling industries to commence operations immediately.
- **Scheme Duration:** Six years (from 2026-27 to 2031-32).

##### Mode of Implementation:

- **Sponsoring Agency:** State/Union Territory Government or Central PSU.
- **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV):** To be jointly constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)—specifically through its 'National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT)'—and the respective State Nodal Agency.



# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 April 2026



- The SPV shall hold ownership of the assets created under the BHAVYA Scheme. Furthermore, it will be responsible for the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the industrial park being developed.
- **Financial Assistance:** Financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per acre will be provided for each project. For parks developed by the private sector, assistance of ₹50 lakh per acre will be provided. This financial assistance will be extended for the following:
  - **Core Infrastructure:** Roads, utilities, drainage systems, and ICT facilities.
  - **Value-Added Infrastructure:** Factory sheds, laboratories, and warehousing facilities.
  - **Social Infrastructure:** Worker housing and other amenities.
  - **Additional Assistance:** Financial assistance of up to 25% of the project cost will be provided for external infrastructure (covering connectivity and integration with existing networks) to ensure 'last-mile connectivity.'

-:26:-

## River Basin Management (RBM) Scheme Extended for the Next 5 Years



### Why in News?

- The Central Government has approved the continuation of this scheme during the tenure of the 16th Finance Commission (2026-27 to 2030-31). This scheme is fully funded by the Central Government.



### Key Points:

#### River Basin Management (RBM) Scheme

- **Inception:** It was launched in 2014 as a Central Sector Scheme.
- **Administration:** Administered by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- **Geographical Scope and Priority Areas:** Strategically important and water-rich yet underdeveloped regions—specifically the North Eastern Region—and the Indus River Basin in Jammu & Kashmir/Ladakh.
- The aforementioned basins (river valleys) have been prioritized due to their significance regarding national water security, trans-boundary water management, flood control, and ecological sustainability.
- **Institutional Structure:** The scheme comprises the following two broad components:
  - **Brahmaputra Board:** For basin-level planning and flood management in the North Eastern Region.
  - **Investigation of Water Resources Development Schemes (IWRDS):** This is implemented through the following entities:
    - **Central Water Commission (CWC):** It conducts surveys, investigations, and prepares Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for water resource projects, such as those in the Indus and Brahmaputra river basins.
    - **National Water Development Agency (NWDA):** It focuses on water resource planning at the national level, particularly under the River Linking Project.

## Flexibility and Logistics Interventions for Export Facilitation (RELIEF)

### Why in News?

- Amidst the West Asia crisis, the government has expanded the scope of the RELIEF scheme.



### Key Points:

#### RELIEF Scheme:

- This is a time-bound measure under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).
- Objective:** Its aim is to assist Indian exporters in coping with high freight costs and rising insurance premiums. Additionally, it provides support regarding war-related export risks.
- Nodal and Implementing Agency:** ECGC Ltd. (formerly Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd.), which is wholly owned by the Government of India (Ministry of Commerce and Industry).

#### Key Features:

- MSME-Centric Support:** Ensuring reimbursement assistance for high logistics costs and surcharges.
- Export Cycle Coverage:** Providing end-to-end assistance for shipment planning, insurance, etc.

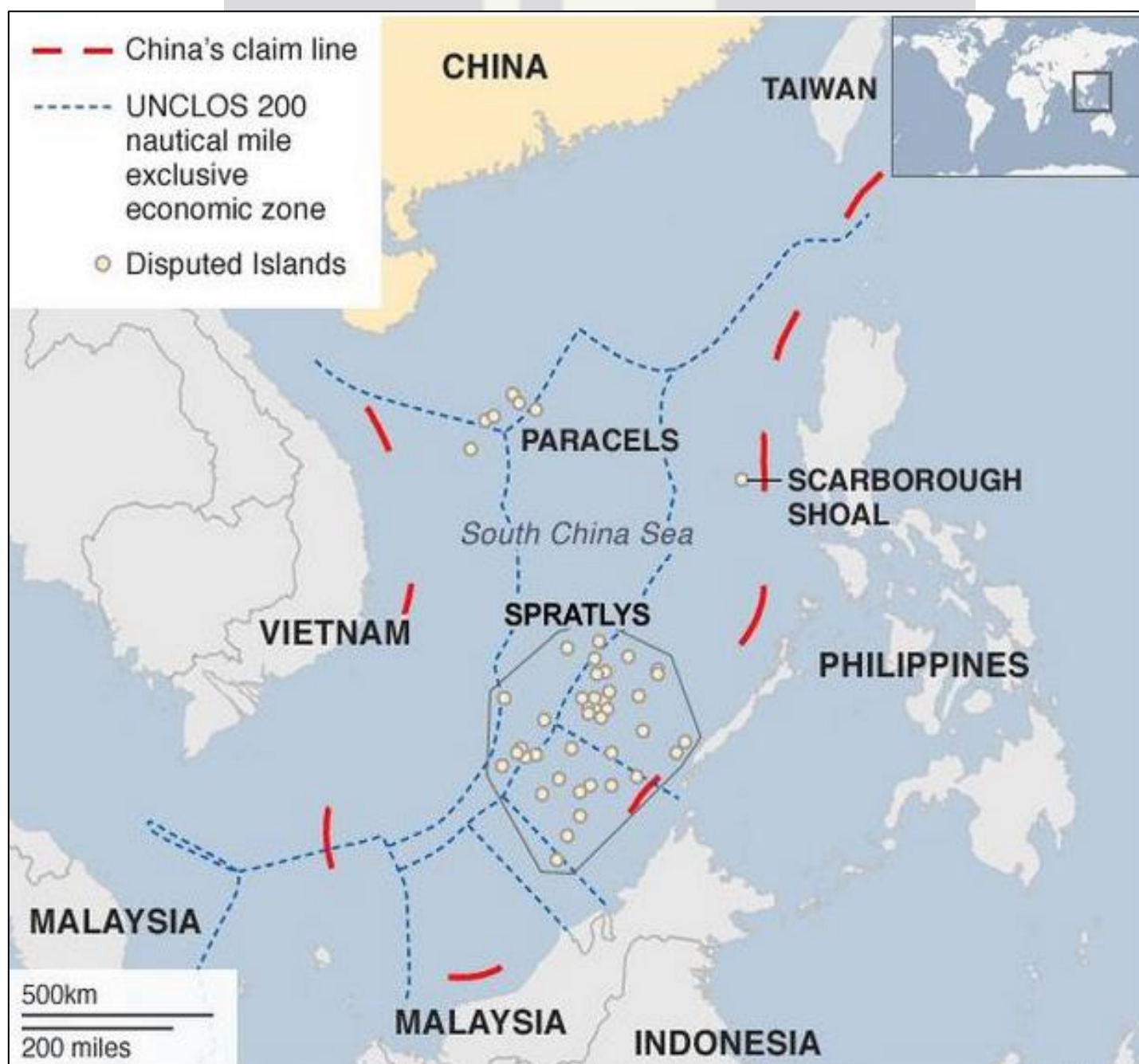
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## INTERNATIONAL

### Scarborough Shoal

#### Why in News?

- China has deployed ships and barriers to blockade Scarborough Shoal in the disputed South China Sea.



# Daily Current Affairs

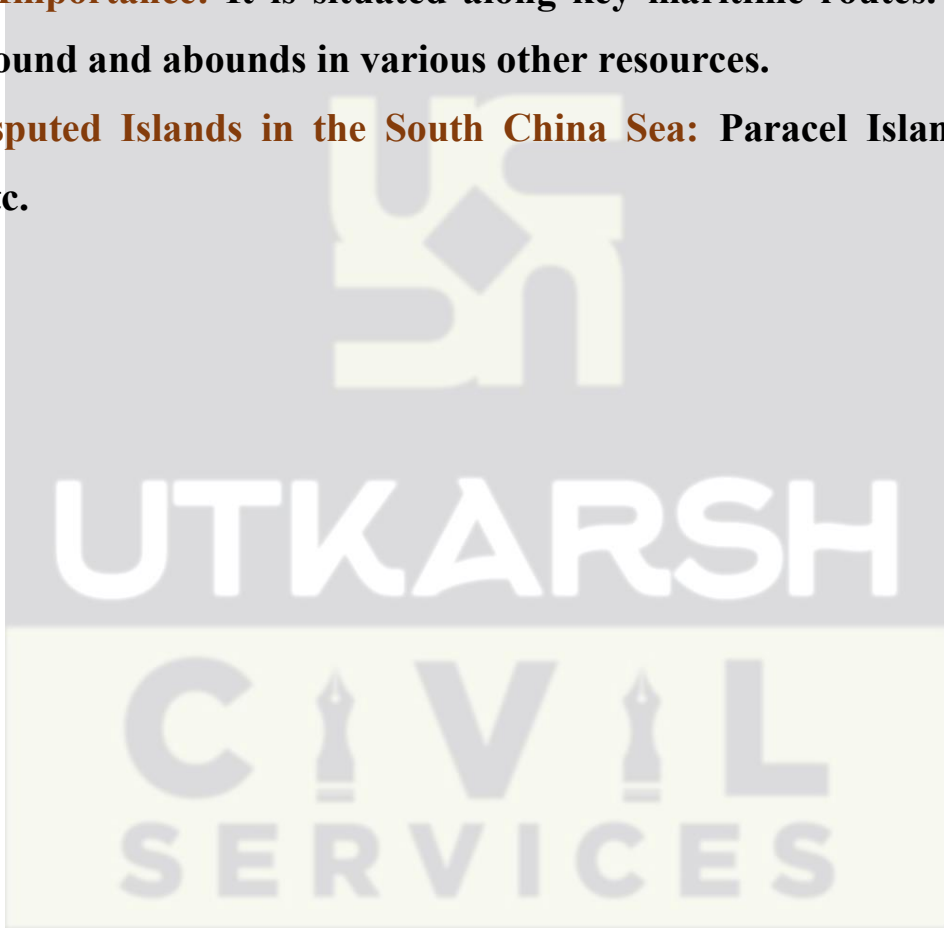
Date : 20 April 2026



## Key Points:

### Scarborough Shoal:

- It is a disputed atoll in the South China Sea. Both China and the Philippines lay claim to its sovereignty.
- **Strategic Importance:** It is situated along key maritime routes. It is a rich fishing ground and abounds in various other resources.
- **Other Disputed Islands in the South China Sea:** Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, etc.



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## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### Phytoremediation

#### Why in News?

- Ahmedabad's Kankaria Coaching Depot has become India's first "water-neutral" railway facility.



#### Key Points:

- This depot conserves water by treating and reusing its wastewater through the application of phytoremediation technology.

#### Phytoremediation:

- This is a bioremediation process that utilizes organisms such as plants, microalgae, and aquatic weeds. This technique is capable of removing toxic heavy metals from the soil.

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Date : 20 April 2026

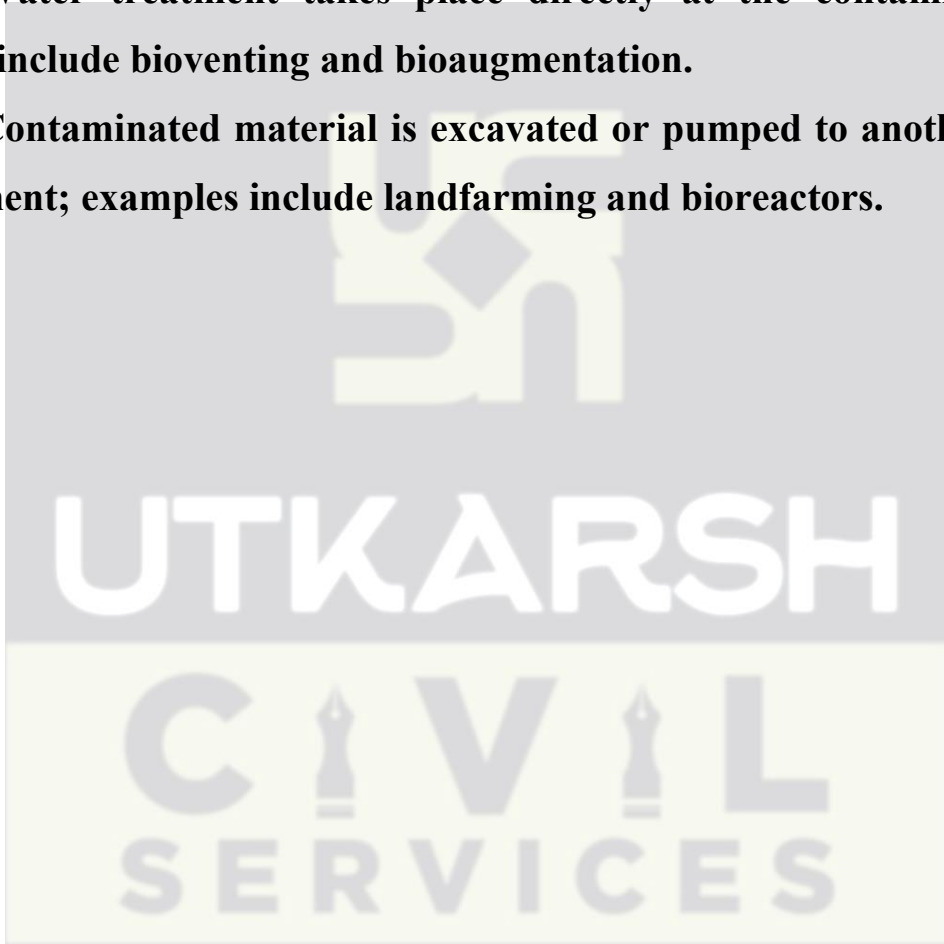


- It is a more sustainable and eco-friendly technique compared to other methods used to eliminate toxicity from the soil.

- **Examples:** Water hyacinth, duckweed, and water lettuce.

## Phytoremediation Techniques:

- **In-situ:** Water treatment takes place directly at the contaminated site; examples include bioventing and bioaugmentation.
- **Ex-situ:** Contaminated material is excavated or pumped to another location for treatment; examples include landfarming and bioreactors.



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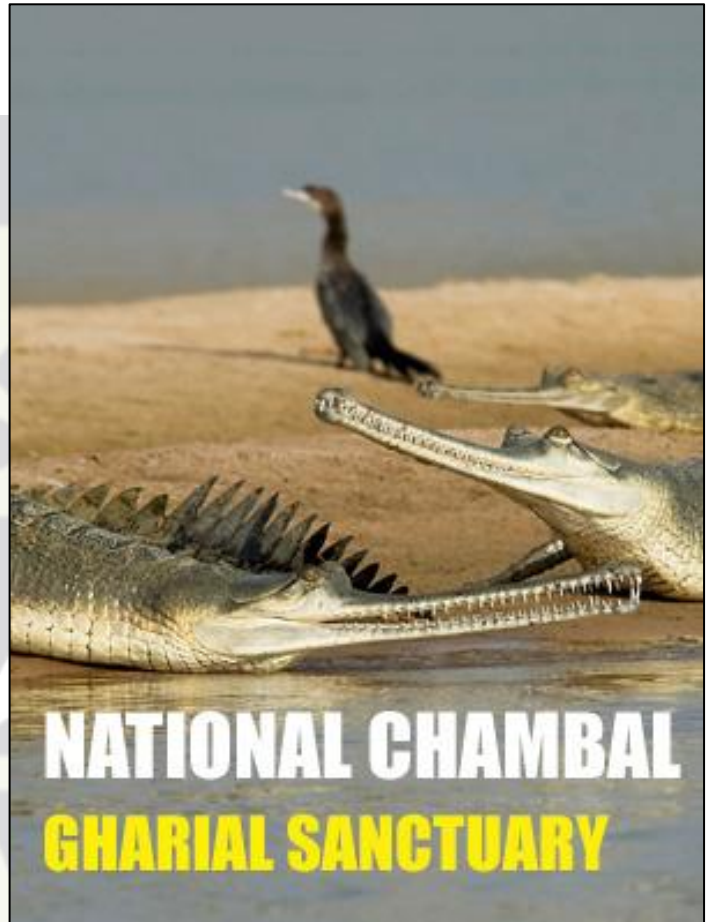
## National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary

### Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has warned of strict action against illegal sand mining within the National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Key Points:

- The Supreme Court has directed the state governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to install CCTV cameras on all routes and to affix GPS devices on all vehicles and machinery utilized in mining activities.



### Reasons for the Persistence of Illegal Sand Mining in India

- Rapidly expanding construction sector
- Preference for river sand (compared to modern alternatives such as M-sand)
- **Regulatory Issues:** Under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, sand is classified as a 'minor mineral.' Consequently, its regulation falls under the purview of the states, resulting in a lack of uniform regulations across the country.
- Challenges in monitoring remote areas
- Politico-criminal nexus, highly organized 'sand mafia,' etc.

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## Adverse Effects of Uncontrolled Sand Mining in India:

### Environmental Impact:

- **River Morphology:** Excessive sand mining alters the natural course of rivers.
- Deterioration in water quality
- Damage to biodiversity and habitats
- Reduced flood-control capacity of rivers
- Damage to public infrastructure

### Loss of Revenue

### National Chambal Ghariyal Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Establishment:** It is a protected area established in 1979.
- **Extent:** It is situated along the Chambal River, near the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Key Species Found:** Ghariyal (Critically Endangered), Mugger Crocodile, Red-crowned Roofed Turtle, and Ganges River Dolphin.

## Biological Diversity Act (BDA), 2002

### Why in News?

- In its recently held 77th meeting, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) approved a new framework to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.



### Key Points:

- This includes streamlining the procedures for utilizing the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Fund and revised guidelines for designated repositories.

#### New Biodiversity Framework

#### Utilization of ABS Fund:

#### Identifiable Sources:

- When resources are obtained from identifiable institutions or repositories, 25–40% of the ABS Fund share will be allocated to them.

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- The remaining 60–75% share will be shared with local communities through the State Biodiversity Boards and the Biodiversity Councils of Union Territories.
- **Unidentified Sources:** If access to bio-resources is obtained through intermediaries or traders, the ABS Fund will be utilized directly for biodiversity conservation and management.
- **Revised Repository Guidelines:** These include provisions such as promoting the maintenance of digital records for the identification and monitoring of resources.

## What is Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)?

- ABS refers to how genetic resources can be accessed and how the benefits arising from their utilization are shared between the communities/countries utilizing those resources (users) and those providing the resources (providers).
- **ABS Framework:** This is regulated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- The Bonn Guidelines and the Nagoya Protocol (2010) relate to 'Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)'.
- In India, this is regulated under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, as well as the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations, 2025.