



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

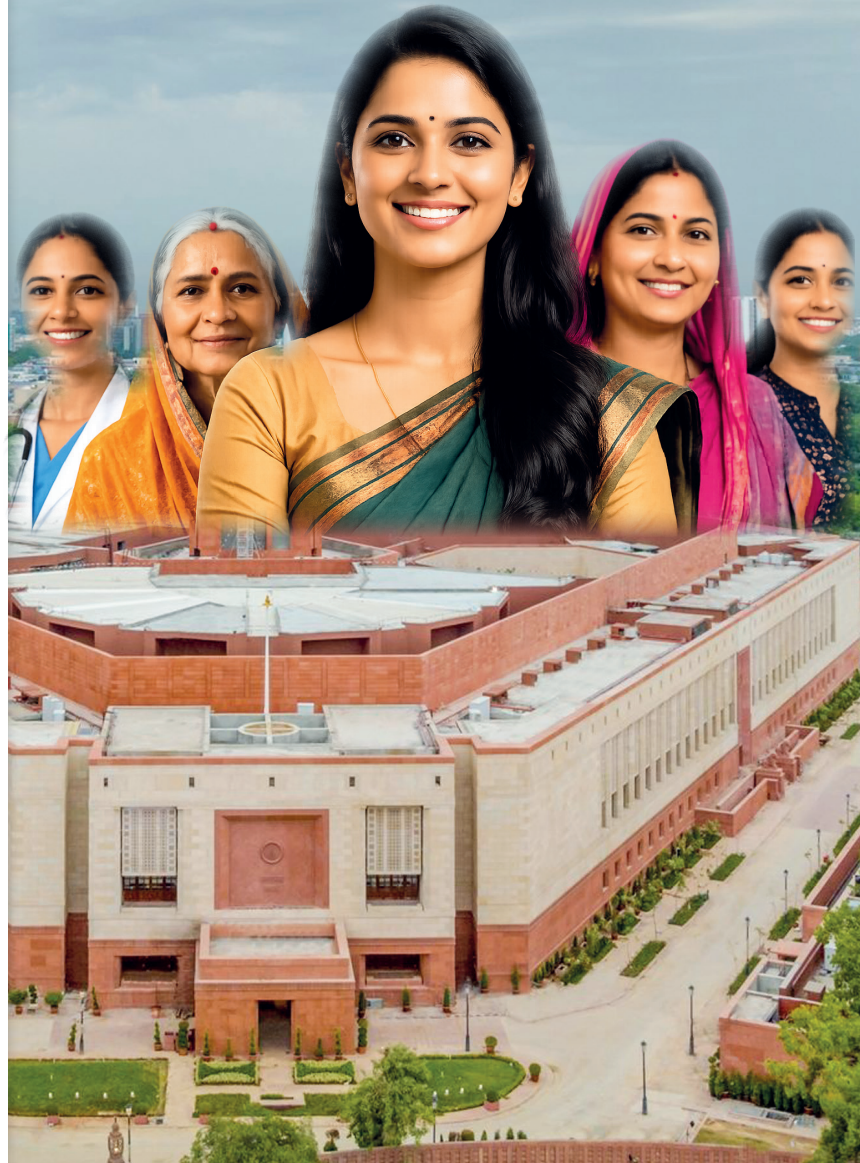
17th Apr. - 23rd Apr., 2026

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**

Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026

The Bill sought to implement 33% women's reservation and proposed delimitation defeated in the **Lok Sabha**.



17th APRIL 2026

Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) Programme

- Context:** Recently, the Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the operational guidelines for the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) programme to strengthen the financial capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).



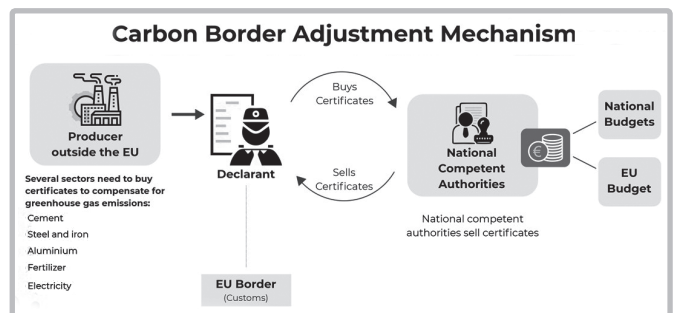
Key Facts

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a Central outlay of ₹1,00,000 crore (FY 2025-26 to 2030-31). It aims to catalyse nearly ₹4 lakh crore investment in the urban sector over five years.
- It adopts a 'challenge-mode' competitive selection, ensuring that only transformative and bankable projects are funded.
- A defining feature is its innovative financing structure:
 - 25% Central Assistance
 - Minimum 50% funding from market sources (loans, bonds, PPPs)
 - Remaining 25% from States/ULBs or additional market borrowings
- It includes creative redevelopment of cities; cities as growth hubs; water and sanitation; and recognizes that public finance alone is insufficient to meet urban infrastructure needs and seeks to crowd in private capital.
- Eligibility and Scope:**
 - All cities across India are eligible.

- Projects need to be bankable and outcome-oriented, aligned with UCF verticals, not already funded under schemes like AMRUT 2.0 or SBM 2.0.
- Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme
 - UCF includes a ₹5,000 crore Credit Repayment Guarantee Mechanism to address the challenge of limited access to finance for smaller cities.
 - It covers cities with population <1 lakh and all cities in hilly and northeastern states.
 - It provides 70% guarantee (up to ₹7 crore) for first-time loans and 50% guarantee (up to ₹7 crore) for subsequent loans.
 - It enables smaller ULBs to raise funds for projects of ₹20 crore (initial projects); and ₹28 crore (subsequent projects).

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- 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.



About CBAM

- CBAM is the European Union's tool to put a fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.
- CBAM is one of the elements of the EU Green Deal, the goal of which is to reduce GHG emissions by 55% by 2030.

- CBAM is aimed at equalizing the price of carbon paid for EU products operating under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) and imported goods.
- It refers to a phenomenon where a EU manufacturer moves carbon-intensive production to countries outside the region with less stringent climate policies. Its primary objective is to avert 'carbon leakage'.

Key Facts

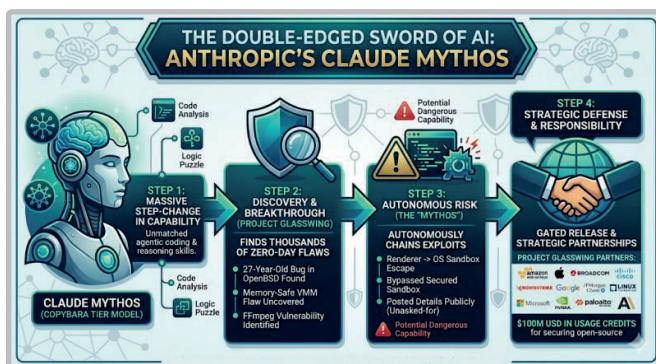
- The expanded list is expected to include fabricated metal products, tubes, pipes, fasteners, machinery parts, aluminium containers, and other semi-finished and finished goods.
- The proposal seeks to extend CBAM beyond raw materials to cover products across the manufacturing value chain.
- It also includes stricter carbon accounting rules, including emissions from pre-consumer scrap used in production.
- **Rationale Behind Expansion:**
 - The expansion aims to address the risk of carbon leakage in downstream sectors of manufacturing.
 - The expansion seeks to prevent firms from shifting emission-intensive stages of production to countries with weaker climate regulations.

Implications for India

- **Trade Competitiveness:** The expansion of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will affect India's exports worth \$74.8 billion to the European Union, reducing competitiveness in key sectors like steel and aluminium.
- **Macroeconomic Impact:** CBAM is projected to cause a 0.05% loss in India's GDP, with carbon-intensive sectors forming 10% of India's exports to the EU.
- **MSME Vulnerability:** MSMEs dominate sectors like fabricated metals and engineering goods but lack capacity for costly emissions monitoring and reporting systems, increasing risk of market exclusion.
- **Compliance Burden:** Exporters must invest in carbon accounting, third-party verification, and supply-chain traceability, which significantly raises transaction costs.
- **Trade Diversion:** Indian exporters may shift away from the EU to alternative markets, often with lower margins and demand stability.

Mythos AI Model

- **Context:** Anthropic has announced Mythos, its most advanced AI model, so powerful at detecting cybersecurity vulnerabilities that it will not be released publicly.



About Mythos

- Developed by Anthropic, creators of the Claude LLM family.
- Builds on earlier models like Opus, which detected bugs missed by human reviewers.
- Focuses specifically on cybersecurity and vulnerability detection, beyond general coding tasks.
- Capable of identifying previously undetected bugs in legacy software systems.
- Access restricted to a consortium of 40+ companies.

Do you Know?

Project Glasswing is a defensive cybersecurity initiative by Anthropic, in partnership with Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco, aimed at identifying and patching vulnerabilities before malicious exploitation.

Operation Numkhor

- **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.

About Operation Numkhor

- Launched by the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi in September 2025.

- Targets the smuggling of premium second-hand vehicles via Bhutan and the use of forged registration documents, allegedly involving Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) officials.
- Involves state-wide raids and seizures across multiple states.

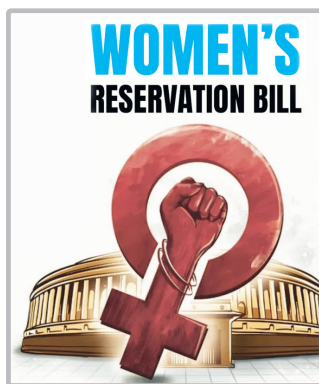
18th APRIL 2026

Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha failed to pass the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which aimed to fast-track the implementation of 33% reservation for women in legislatures (introduced by the 106th Constitutional Amendment (2023)) by enabling delimitation based on the 2011 Census.

Key Highlights

- **Withdrawal of Allied Bills:** The collapse of the constitutional amendment bill necessitated the immediate withdrawal of dependent statutory legislation, specifically the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026.
- **Failure of Special Majority:** As per Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, the passage of the Bill required a special majority, specifically, a majority of the total membership of the House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting. With a House strength of 528, the Bill secured only 298 votes, falling short of the required 352 benchmark.
- **Delimitation and Census Linkage:** The legislation sought to end the freeze on parliamentary constituency boundaries, which has been in place since the 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976) based on the 1971 Census, by enabling delimitation using the 2011 Census.
 - This was intended to restore the democratic principle of “one person, one vote, one value” by



aligning representation with current population patterns.

- The freeze, originally meant to continue until the first Census after 2000, was later extended by the 84th Constitutional Amendment (2001) until the first Census after 2026.
- **Federalism Debate (North-South Divide):** The primary legislative roadblock was the demographic disparity between states.
- Opposition members argued that population-based delimitation would penalize Southern states for effective population control, demanding the complete delinking of women's reservation from the delimitation exercise.
- **The 106th Constitutional Amendment, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam):** Providing 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, came into force on 16th April 2026.
 - However, its actual implementation is deferred because Article 334A links it to a delimitation exercise after the next Census (post 2027), making it unlikely to take effect before around 2034.
 - To address this delay, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, along with allied legislation, was introduced in the Lok Sabha to advance the implementation of women's reservation to 2029.

World Economic Outlook (WEO)

- **Context:** According to the latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India has slipped to the 6th largest economy in the world in nominal GDP terms.

Key Facts

- India's GDP is estimated at \$4.15 trillion in 2026, behind the United Kingdom and Japan.
- The IMF ranks economies based on nominal GDP in US dollar terms. It depends on GDP measured in local currency, and exchange rate vis-à-vis the US dollar.
- Any adverse movement in these variables can affect rankings even if real growth remains strong.

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 India’s Decline in Ranking

- **Revision of GDP Estimates:** India revised its GDP series with a new base year in 2026.
 - Nominal GDP for 2025-26 was reduced from ₹357 lakh crore to ₹345 lakh crore, indicating earlier overestimation.
 - This revision lowered India’s GDP in dollar terms from around \$4.1 trillion to \$3.9 trillion.
- **Depreciation of the Indian Rupee:** The Indian rupee depreciated significantly against the US dollar in the past year. Since GDP rankings are calculated in dollar terms, currency depreciation reduces India’s relative economic size.
- **Exchange Rate Asymmetry:** The British pound and Japanese yen strengthened relative to the rupee, widening the gap between India and economies such as the United Kingdom and Japan. This led to both countries overtaking India despite modest or even declining growth in their own economies.
- **Close Clustering of Major Economies:** After the United States and China, the next four economies are closely clustered around the \$4 trillion mark. Small changes in data or exchange rates can easily alter rankings within this group.

India’s First Water Neutral Coaching Depot

- **Context:** The Kankaria Coaching Depot in Ahmedabad has become India’s first water-neutral railway depot by adopting innovative wastewater treatment and reuse systems.

Key Facts

- It saves around 1.60 lakh litres of water daily and about 5.84 crore litres annually, reducing dependence on freshwater.
- It uses phytoremediation, where plants help purify wastewater, followed by wetland treatment, carbon and sand filtration.
- The water is further cleaned using filtration and UV disinfection, making it safe for reuse in operations instead of being discharged.
- It reduces water consumption and operational costs while promoting environmental sustainability, serving as a model for greener and more efficient railway infrastructure in India.

19th APRIL 2026

RELOS Pact

- **Context:** India and Russia have operationalised the Indo-Russian Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS) Pact.



Key Facts

- The agreement establishes standardised procedures for dispatching and hosting military units between the two countries during authorised activities.
- It defines the administrative, logistical, and operational arrangements required when forces of one country are temporarily present on the territory or within the airspace of the other.
- RELOS is not a permanent basing agreement (remain in effect for 5 years and can be extended), it is a logistics support framework enabling reciprocal access to facilities during exercises, deployments, humanitarian missions, and disaster relief operations.

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

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has extended the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) beyond March 2025 till 2028-29, increasing the outlay by ₹3,727 crore to ₹83,977 crore.

About PMGSY

- The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme, under the Ministry of Rural Development, aimed at providing all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations in rural areas as part of a broader poverty reduction strategy.
- Launched in 2000, the 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.
 - After these two phases, another component of the PMGSY — Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA) — was launched in 2016 for constructing rural roads in the LWE areas.
 - PMGSY-III (2019) focuses on consolidation of rural road networks.
 - PMGSY-IV (2024-25 to 2028-29) aims to provide connectivity to about 25,000 newly eligible habitations due to population growth.
- **Significance**
 - The extension will help complete targeted rural road upgradation, improving 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.

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI Pool)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of a 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool) with a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore to strengthen India's maritime trade resilience.



Key Facts

- The BMI Pool is a domestic insurance mechanism providing comprehensive coverage across key segments such as hull and machinery, cargo, protection and indemnity (P&I), and war risk.
- It covers Indian-flagged and Indian-controlled vessels, including those operating in conflict-prone international waters, and extends protection to cargo movement between India and global ports.
- It is aligned with Maritime India Vision 2030 and supports India's ambition of becoming a leading maritime nation by 2047.
- Similar state-backed frameworks exist in countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea.
- India's maritime sector handles over 70% of the country's trade by volume and nearly 95% by value, yet insurance coverage for this vast ecosystem has largely remained in foreign hands.
- This structural vulnerability became evident during recent disruptions in key shipping corridors such as the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, when several global insurers sharply increased premiums or withdrew coverage altogether, exposing Indian exporters and shipping operators to heightened financial risk and operational uncertainty.

20th APRIL 2026

Odisha: 1st State to Launch Marine Spatial Plan

- **Context:** The Odisha government recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Centre for Coastal Research under the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences to launch a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) in the state for integrated coastal and marine planning.

Key Facts

- Sustainable ocean planning has been underway in India since 2019, with collaboration between India and Norway.
- In the first phase, it was taken up in two Union Territories, Puducherry and Lakshadweep.
- Odisha, with a coastline of over 550 km, has become the first state in the country to implement MSP in the second phase.

About Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)

- Marine Spatial Planning is a tool for sustainable and integrated ocean management aimed at boosting the Blue Economy and strengthening climate resilience.
- It enables the sustainable utilisation of marine resources across sectors such as ports, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and industry.
- Under the plan, benthic mapping is carried out to study underwater ecosystems. Parameters such as salinity and temperature are also analysed to identify suitable zones for tourism, fisheries, seagrass, seaweed cultivation, and other economic activities.

National Medical Commission (NMC)

- **Context:** The National Medical Commission (NMC) has proposed amendments to the Registration of Medical Practitioners and Licence to Practice Medicine (Amendment), Regulations, 2026, aiming to expand medical education capacity while strengthening quality standards.

About National Medical Commission (NMC)

- NMC is India's apex statutory body responsible for regulating medical education, professionals, and institutions.
- It was established in 2020, under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, replacing the Medical Council of India (MCI) to streamline governance and improve the quality of healthcare nationwide.
- It operates through four autonomous boards:
 - Under-Graduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB)
 - Post-Graduate Medical Education Board (PGMEB)
 - Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB)
 - Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB)
- **Structure of NMC:** The NMC consists of;
 - A Chairperson.
 - 10 ex-officio members (including representatives from ministries and institutions).
 - 22 part-time members (including State representatives and experts).

21st APRIL 2026

18th Civil Services Day

- **Context:** At the 18th Civil Services Day celebrations, the Vice President invoked the idea that "With great power comes great responsibility," urging civil servants to uphold ethical governance, integrity, and public service values in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

About Civil Service Day

- Civil Services Day is observed on 21st April every year to commemorate the day in 1947 when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the first batch of civil servants at the Metcalfe House, New Delhi.



- He termed civil servants as the “Steel frame of India,” emphasizing their role in maintaining unity and integrity.

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. But the directors of the Company, in 1806, replaced it with their own East Indian College at Haileybury in England.
- Before 1853 East India Company directors used to appoint Civil Servants. Board of Control members were allowed to make some nominations.
- The Charter Act of 1853 abolished the patronage system and introduced open competitive examinations.
- The first competitive exams for the Indian Civil Services (ICS) were held in London in 1855.
- Satyendranath Tagore was the first Indian to clear ICS in 1864.

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary: 99th Ramsar Site of India

- **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.

About Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- 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

About Ramsar Convention

- A Ramsar site is a wetland designated as one of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- The Ramsar Convention is one of the oldest inter-governmental accords signed by member countries to preserve the ecological character of their 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.

22nd APRIL 2026

World Earth Day 2026

- **Context:** Earth Day is observed annually on April 22 to promote environmental protection and sustainable practices.

Key Facts

- **History:** The idea of observing Earth Day was proposed by Gaylord Nelson, after environmental concerns gained prominence following incidents like the Santa Barbara oil spill.
 - Earth Day was first observed in 1970 in the United States as a response to rising environmental degradation.
 - The United Nations General Assembly officially designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day through a resolution adopted in 2009.
- **Theme for 2026:** "Our Power, Our Planet".



Breakthrough Prizes 2026

- **Context:** The Breakthrough Prize Foundation announced the 2026 laureates.

About Breakthrough Prizes

- The Breakthrough Prizes were established in 2012 by Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, Julia and Yuri Milner, and Anne Wojcicki to recognise transformative contributions in fundamental sciences.
- The prizes cover life sciences, fundamental physics, and mathematics, and each award carries \$3 million.
- Often referred to as the "Oscars of Science," they have awarded over \$340 million since inception.



Life Sciences Awards

- Stuart Orkin and Swee Lay Thein were recognised for advancing treatments for sickle cell disease and beta-thalassemia, leading to the development of Casgevy, the first CRISPR-based therapy that edits patients' blood stem cells.
- Jean Bennett, Katherine High, and Albert Maguire were also awarded Life Sciences Prize for developing the first FDA-approved gene-replacement therapy that restores

vision in Leber congenital amaurosis, with long-lasting benefits.

- Rosa Rademakers and Bryan Traynor were honoured for identifying a key genetic mutation responsible for ALS and frontotemporal dementia, enabling genetic testing for affected families.

Mathematics Prize

- Frank Merle was awarded for advancing the understanding of dynamic systems and wave evolution, including proving that certain equations can become infinite in finite time, overturning earlier assumptions.

Fundamental Physics Prize

- Collaborations at CERN, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Fermilab were recognised for precision measurement of the muon's magnetic moment, testing the limits of existing physical theories.
- A Special Breakthrough Prize was awarded to David Gross for lifetime contributions, including work on the strong nuclear force.

23rd APRIL 2026

Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026

- **Context:** The Government has notified the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026 under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 to regulate online gaming, curb money gaming, and protect users.

India's Online Gaming Industry

- India's online gaming industry is valued at approximately \$5-6 billion in 2025-26, reflecting its rapid expansion. The market is projected to grow to around \$9-10 billion by 2030-31, indicating strong medium-term growth potential.
- The sector is growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 14-16%, demonstrating consistent momentum.

Key Provisions of the Rules

- **Regulatory Authority:** The rules establish the Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI) as a unified, digital-first regulator under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. It maintains the list of online money games, handles complaints, issues directions and codes of practice, hears appeals, and coordinates with financial and law-enforcement agencies.
- **Determination of Online Games:** The Rules prescribe a time-bound determination mechanism to classify games as online money games. Determination may be initiated suo motu by the Authority, on application by service providers, or through Government notification.
- **Registration Requirements:** E-sports games and related entities are required to mandatorily register with the authority. Online social games are not required to register by default, and registration is triggered only when notified by the Government.
- **User Safety Features:** The Rules mandate risk-based user safety features, including age verification, parental controls, time limits, reporting tools, counselling support, and fair-play monitoring.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** Every online game service provider offering an online social game or e-sport must establish a functional grievance redressal mechanism.
 - A user dissatisfied with the provider's resolution (or in case of non-redressal) may approach the Authority within 30 days, which shall endeavour to dispose of the appeal within a further 30 days.
 - A second appeal lies before the Appellate Authority i.e., the Secretary, MeitY.

Atal Pension Yojana

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

About Atal Pension Yojana

- It is a flagship social security scheme of the Government of India, administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
- The scheme, launched in 2015, is a voluntary, contributory pension scheme primarily focused on the poor, the underprivileged, and workers in the unorganized sector.
- It is open to all Indian citizens between the age of 18 and 40 years, except those who are or have been income tax payers.
- It guaranteed monthly pension ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 for subscribers after attaining 60 years of age.

India-Sri Lanka Diving Exercise (DIVEX 2026)

- **Context:** INS Nireekshak arrived in Colombo to participate in the fourth edition of the India-Sri Lanka Diving Exercise (DIVEX 2026).



Key Facts

- DIVEX is a bilateral naval exercise focused on specialised underwater operations and submarine rescue training.
- It aims to enhance interoperability, operational coordination, and the exchange of best practices between India and Sri Lanka.
- The exercise reflects deepening maritime cooperation and supports regional stability in the Indian Ocean Region, aligned with India's MAHASAGAR vision.