

03/04/2026 Daily current affairs

Prelims articles:

1. *Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) Scheme:*

Context: Hon'ble Union Minister of Communications Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government is promoting the expansion of public Wi-Fi access across the country through the Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) Scheme, aimed at accelerating the proliferation of broadband services through public Wi-Fi networks across the country.

About Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) Scheme:

- ❖ It aims to bring large scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots through the country to drive up connectivity options and improve digital access.
- ❖ The scheme envisages setting up of public Wi-Fi networks and access points by local Kirana without any licence, fee or registration.
- ❖ A person, who wants to use public Wi-Fi, can do so via an app and will make payments as per usage.
- ❖ A central registry will be maintained by the Centre for Development of Telematics.
- ❖ Department of Telecom (DoT), Ministry of Communications is the nodal agency to proliferate Broadband through Public Wi-Fi networks.

2. *SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension):*

Context: GoI Signs Agreement to provide SAMPANN 'platform-as-a—service' to State Government of Goa and Cochin Port Authority.

About SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension):

- ❖ It is the flagship digital pension and financial management platform of the Department of Telecommunications.
- ❖ It is dedicated to the nation by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 29th December 2018.
- ❖ It is a cloud-based, end-to-end pension management system of the Department of Telecommunications, managed by the Office of the Controller General of Communication Accounts (CGCA).
- ❖ It was designed to streamline pension sanction, authorisation, accounting and payment through a single digital platform.

3. *The Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) Initiative:*

Context: The Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) Initiative has been launched by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme.

About The Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) Initiative:

- ❖ Its objective is to enhance market access, branding, digital marketing capabilities, e-commerce integration and export opportunities for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).
- ❖ National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), a Schedule 'A' CPSE under the Ministry of MSME conducts MSME TEAM Workshops in various districts/Venues across the country including Maharashtra, thereby mobilising MSMEs through awareness workshops, hand-holding support and facilitation for on boarding on the TEAM portal and ONDC platform.

4. *National Anubhav Awards Scheme:*

Context: National Anubhav Awards Outreach Campaign, 2025-26 concludes with all time high participation.

More about National Anubhav Awards Scheme:

- ❖ The Anubhav initiative, launched in March 2015 by the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) which provides a platform for documenting the administrative history of the country through sharing of knowledge, best practices, and administrative insights by retired and retiring employees.
- ❖ The National Anubhav Awards Scheme was introduced to recognize and incentivize outstanding contributions. To date, 63 National Anubhav Awards and 29 Jury Certificates have been conferred.

5. *Energy distribution of top states as of Feb 2026:*

Category	Top State	Capacity (MW)	2nd Place	3rd Place
Wind Energy	Gujarat	31,404.95	Tamil Nadu	Karnataka
Solar Energy	Rajasthan	54,226.99	Gujarat	Tamil Nadu
Biomass	Chhattisgarh	1,327.09	Punjab	Rajasthan
Bagasse (Cogeneration)	Maharashtra	3,044.52	Karnataka	Uttar Pradesh
Small Hydro	Himachal Pradesh	2,605.70	Karnataka	Kerala
Others (Waste to Energy)	West Bengal	1,334.66	Delhi	Andhra Pradesh
Total Renewable	Gujarat	54,974.48	Tamil Nadu	Karnataka

6. *Ammonium Nitrate:*

Context: Recently, Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Ltd. and Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. signed an agreement for coal to the Ammonium Nitrate Project.

About Ammonium Nitrate:

- ❖ **Appearance:** Ammonium nitrate is a white, crystalline, water-soluble solid.
- ❖ **Occurrence:** It is not found naturally and is manufactured by reacting ammonia with nitric acid.
- ❖ **Explosive Nature:** It is classified as an explosive (above 45% concentration) due to its use in IEDs.
- ❖ **Chemical Nature:** It acts as an oxidizer, supplying oxygen to accelerate combustion.
- ❖ **Fire Hazard:** Fires involving ammonium nitrate are difficult to extinguish as it provides its own oxygen.
- ❖ **Legal Status:** It is listed as a hazardous chemical under the Hazardous Chemicals Rules, 1989.
- ❖ **Import Regulation:** Import requires prior permission for specific grades.
- ❖ **Regulatory Authority:** It is regulated by the Petroleum & Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) under DPIIT.
- ❖ **Hygroscopic Property:** It absorbs moisture from air and can harden into a rock-like mass.
- ❖ **Thermal Decomposition:** On high heating, it decomposes explosively releasing nitrogen dioxide (orange fumes).

- ❖ **Applications:** Used in fertilizers, instant cold packs (endothermic dissolution), and various industrial and medical uses.

7. *Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary:*

Context: A rare sighting of a white female albino Himalayan tahr has recently been recorded in Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary.

About Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary:

- ❖ It is located in the Bharmour region of Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary is the second largest sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ It lies between the Ravi and Chenab rivers and is characterised by high-altitude terrain.
- ❖ It is bordered by Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary in the south-east and Tundah Wildlife Sanctuary in the north-west.
- ❖ The sanctuary is also known for the revered Manimahesh Temple, which attracts thousands of pilgrims despite its difficult access and extreme cold.
- ❖ This dual significance—ecological and religious—makes the region particularly important for both conservation and cultural heritage.
- ❖ The sanctuary supports a rich variety of fauna, including endangered and notable species such as ibex, musk deer, Himalayan tahr, monal snowcock, pheasants, red-vented bulbul, and white-cheeked bulbul.

8. *Pardoning powers of Governor:*

Context: A Full Bench of the Madras High Court held that the Governor, whether he/she likes it or not, is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers while exercising powers under Article 161 of the Constitution in matters relating to remission and premature release of convicts.

What is a mercy petition?

- ❖ Mercy petition to the President or Governor is last constitutional resort a convict can take when he is sentenced by court of law.
- ❖ Mercy pleas and pardons are discretionary acts of grace, not legal rights.
- ❖ Mercy is exercised through clemency power, which is also known as the pardoning power.

Pardoning powers of Governor:

- ❖ The Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.
- ❖ **Pardon:** Complete absolution from punishment.
- ❖ **Respite:** Lesser punishment due to special circumstances like disability or pregnancy.
- ❖ **Reprieve:** Temporary stay of execution, allowing time for appeal.
- ❖ **Remit:** Reduces duration of sentence while keeping its nature the same.
- ❖ **Commute:** Replace the punishment with a lesser form, e.g., death to life imprisonment

Mains specific articles:

1. *Artemis II: what is at stake for U.S.?: (GS paper 3)*

- ❖ **Context & Significance** - NASA launched **Artemis II** on April 2 (IST); first human mission beyond low-earth orbit since Apollo 17; major milestone for U.S. space programme.
- ❖ **Crew & Historic Firsts** - Commander Reid Wiseman; Pilot Victor Glover (first person of colour on lunar trajectory); Mission Specialist Christina Koch (first woman); Astronaut Jeremy Hansen (first non-U.S. citizen).
- ❖ **Mission Objective** - Test mission (no landing); validate rocket, crew capsule, ground systems; ensure readiness for future lunar landing.
- ❖ **Launch System & Trajectory** - Uses Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion capsule; follows free-return trajectory around far side of Moon (~7,500 km); returns to Earth for Pacific splashdown in ~10 days.
- ❖ **Mission Profile** - 24-hour Earth orbit check of life-support systems; trans-lunar injection burn; testing manual piloting, navigation, communication, and data relay; study human physiological responses in deep space.
- ❖ **Re-entry & Heat Shield** - Re-entry speed ~40,000 km/hr; heat shield faces ~5,000°C; improvements made after Artemis I erosion issue by modifying trajectory.
- ❖ **Programme Restructuring** - Led by Jared Isaacman; Artemis III (2027) to test docking with SpaceX & Blue Origin landers; Artemis IV (2028) planned for actual lunar landing.
- ❖ **Operational Changes** - Avoided SLS upgrade to reduce delays; increased launch frequency; addressed workforce attrition and loss of institutional memory.
- ❖ **Lunar Gateway Decision** - Cancellation of planned lunar space station; resources redirected to infrastructure at Moon's south pole.
- ❖ **China Factor** - Competition with China accelerated timeline; China developing Mengzhou spacecraft, Long March-10 rocket, Lanyue lander; plans human landing by 2030 and International Lunar Research Station.
- ❖ **Strategic Importance of Moon** - Focus on south pole water ice in permanently shadowed craters; key for future habitation and fuel; first mover advantage has geopolitical implications.
- ❖ **Challenges & Delays** - Artemis I and II faced multiple delays; high cost (~\$93 billion total, ~\$2 billion per launch); dependence on private partners like SpaceX and Blue Origin.
- ❖ **Success vs Failure Impact** - Success boosts confidence, partnerships, and political support; failure could delay programme, reduce trust, and shift strategy amid U.S.-China space race.

2. *Education Ministry notifies NCERT as deemed university: (GS paper 2)*

- ❖ **Context & Decision** - Ministry of Education granted “deemed to be university” status to National Council of Educational Research and Training via notification dated March 30; based on approval by University Grants Commission expert panel (January).
- ❖ **What the Status Means** - NCERT can now offer academic programmes, courses, and grant degrees independently.
- ❖ **Institutional Coverage** - Status applies to NCERT along with its six regional institutes.
- ❖ **Regulatory Conditions** - Must strictly follow norms of UGC and other statutory bodies; cannot engage in commercial or profit-making activities.
- ❖ **Academic Expansion** - Allowed to start new programmes, including off-campus/offshore centres, only as per UGC guidelines.

- ❖ **Research Focus** - Directed to initiate research, doctoral (PhD) programmes, and innovative academic courses.
- ❖ **Alignment with Policy** - Expansion should align with National Education Policy 2020 and not be limited to emerging areas alone.
- ❖ **Quality Assurance** - Mandatory accreditation: programmes by National Board of Accreditation and institution by National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

About National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT):

- ❖ National Council of Educational Research and Training is an autonomous body set up in 1961 to advise governments on improving school education.
- ❖ It undertakes, promotes, and coordinates research in school education.
- ❖ It develops and publishes textbooks, supplementary materials, journals, and educational literature.
- ❖ It conducts pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.
- ❖ It promotes and disseminates innovative teaching methods and practices.
- ❖ It collaborates with state departments, universities, NGOs, and educational institutions.
- ❖ It acts as a clearing house for ideas and information in school education.
- ❖ It serves as a nodal agency for universalisation of elementary education.
- ❖ It implements bilateral cultural exchange programmes in school education.
- ❖ It collaborates with international organisations and trains educators from developing countries.
- ❖ Under National Education Policy 2020, it develops National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs) for ECCE, school, and adult education.
- ❖ Its headquarters is located at Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ In a significant step to reinforcing India's commitment to regional maritime security and international cooperation, INS Sunayna, an Offshore Patrol Vessel of the Indian Navy, set sail from Mumbai as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR, on April 2, 2026.
- ☐ Defence exports have touched an all-time high of Rs 38,424 crore in the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26, marking a massive rise of Rs 14,802 crore (62.66%) over the previous fiscal year's figure of Rs 23,622 crore.
- ☐ India's space sector is set to receive a significant push with the steady progress of the Antariksh Venture Capital Fund. Recently, the Union Minister announced that investments under this dedicated fund are expected to begin from the first quarter of FY2027.

Practice questions:

Objective questions:

Consider the following statements regarding PM-WANI Scheme:

1. It aims to expand public Wi-Fi hotspots to improve digital connectivity across India.
2. Setting up public Wi-Fi under the scheme does not requires a licence and registration from the government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary is known for which of the following species ?

- (a) Lion
- (b) One-horned Rhinoceros
- (c) Snow Leopard
- (d) Musk Deer

Which of the following states accounts for the largest share of renewable energy as of 2026?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Rajasthan
- (c) Maharashtra
- (d) Tamil Nadu

Mains practice question:

The recent granting of “deemed to be university” status to National Council of Educational Research and Training marks a significant shift in India’s education governance. Examine its potential impact on school education, teacher training, and research. Also discuss the challenges associated with this transition. (250 words)

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