

21/04/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Basaveshwara:*

Context: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid homage to Jagadguru Basaveshwara on the occasion of Basava Jayanthi. As per the Hindu calendar, the birth of Basavanna falls on the 3rd day of Vaisahaka month in the Shukla paksha. This usually falls either in April or May of the English calendar.

More about Basavanna:

- ❖ Basavanna (1131 CE, Basavana Bagewadi, Karnataka) was a social reformer, saint, and leader of an anti-caste movement
- ❖ Rejected orthodox rituals and emphasized personal devotion to Lord Shiva
- ❖ As chief minister under Bijjala, promoted social reforms and revitalized Shaivism
- ❖ Spread ideas through Kannada Vachanas, popularizing “Kayakave Kailasa” (work is worship)
- ❖ Advocated inner spirituality, treating body and soul as a temple over external rituals
- ❖ Promoted use of Kannada in spiritual discourse for inclusivity
- ❖ Encouraged symbolic devotion using Istalinga, Rudraksha, and Vibhuti
- ❖ Propounded Lingayat philosophy of qualified non-dualism (unity of Atma and Shiva)
- ❖ Emphasized mantra “Shivaya Namah” and trinity of Guru, Linga, and Jangama
- ❖ Introduced socio-economic principles: Kayaka (dignity of labour) and Dasoha (service and sharing)
- ❖ Founded Anubhava Mantapa, considered the first religious parliament
- ❖ Presided by Allama Prabhu with contributions from Akka Mahadevi and Channabasavanna
- ❖ Anubhava Mantapa became the foundation of Veerashaiva philosophy
- ❖ Cradle of Vachana literature promoting social equality and devotion
- ❖ Authored important Vachanas like Shat-sthala-vachana, Kala-jnana-vachana, and Raja-yoga-vachana
- ❖ Vachana Sahitya used simple Kannada prose to oppose caste and ritualism and promote universal Shiva worship

2. *Samriddh Gram Initiative:*

Context: Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet, an initiative of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has been selected as a nominee for the prestigious WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) Prizes 2026 under the Action Line AL C6: Enabling Environment category.

About BharatNet project:

- ❖ The National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) was launched in 2011 and renamed BharatNet Project in 2015
- ❖ Implemented under the Ministry of Communications to provide high-speed broadband to all Gram Panchayats
- ❖ Aims to deliver affordable internet and enable e-health, e-education, and e-governance in rural areas
- ❖ One of the world’s largest rural telecom projects targeting about 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats

- ❖ Funded through Digital Bharat Nidhi, which replaced the Universal Service Obligation Fund
- ❖ Executed by Bharat Broadband Network Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle
- ❖ Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited acts as the Project Management Agency for operation and maintenance

About Samriddh Gram Initiative:

- ❖ The Samriddh Gram initiative builds on BharatNet Project to create integrated rural service hubs
- ❖ Establishes Samriddhi Kendras as one-stop centres offering “phygital” (physical + digital) services
- ❖ Provides access to healthcare, education, agriculture, governance, financial services, and e-commerce
- ❖ Uses high-speed broadband, FTTH connectivity, and public Wi-Fi for service delivery
- ❖ Enables telemedicine, smart classrooms, e-governance, and technology-driven agriculture in rural areas

About World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS):

- ❖ The WSIS Forum is a globally recognized multi-stakeholder platform focused on advancing digital development and fostering inclusive information societies.
- ❖ It brings together key stakeholders—including governments, industry, academia, civil society, and international organizations—to collaborate on critical digital issues.
- ❖ The WSIS Prizes celebrate innovative ICT-driven projects that contribute to sustainable development worldwide.
- ❖ The WSIS Forum 2026 is scheduled to take place from 6–10 July 2026 in Geneva, featuring discussions on emerging technologies, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and global digital cooperation.

3. 18th Civil Services Day:

Context: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions will observe 18th Civil Services Day on Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

About Civil Services Day:

- ❖ The 18th Civil Services Day (April 21, 2026) theme is “Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile”
- ❖ The Civil Services Day is observed annually as an occasion for the Civil Servants across India to rededicate themselves to the cause of citizens and renew their commitment to public service and excellence in their work.
- ❖ On this day in 1947, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the probationers of the All India Administrative Service where he described civil servants as the steel frame of India.

4. PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan) Scheme:

Context: Ministry of Minority Affairs has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Patna under the PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan) Scheme.

About the agreement:

- ❖ Under this strategic collaboration, 600 minority youth from the State of Bihar will be trained by IIT Patna in emerging and high-demand job roles such as AI Technocrat and Business Analytics Executive.
- ❖ The training programme is designed to equip participants with industry-relevant skills aligned with evolving market needs.
- ❖ By partnering with a premier institution like IIT Patna, the Ministry seeks to ensure quality training, industry exposure, and improved career outcomes for beneficiaries, thereby contributing to inclusive growth and empowerment.

About PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan) Scheme:

- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) is a Central Sector Scheme for socio-economic empowerment of six notified minority communities
- ❖ Focuses on skill development, entrepreneurship (especially for women), and education support for school dropouts
- ❖ Aims to provide need-based skill training and enhance employment/livelihood opportunities
- ❖ Promotes preservation of cultural heritage, traditional arts, and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)
- ❖ Encourages women empowerment through leadership and entrepreneurship training
- ❖ Improves employability through market linkages and access to credit
- ❖ Reserves 3% seats for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) across all components
- ❖ Mandates placement of trained candidates as part of agreements with implementing agencies

5. *Ethanol 85 fuel:*

Context: The government will “very soon” issue draft rules on the roll-out of Ethanol 85 (E85) as vulnerabilities in oil exports exposed during the West Asia crisis sharpen the focus on alternative fuels.

About Ethanol 85 fuel:

- ❖ E85 fuel is a blend of 85% ethanol and 15% petrol.
- ❖ Ethanol is a renewable biofuel made from crops like sugarcane and corn.
- ❖ It is used in Flex-Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) specially designed for high ethanol blends.
- ❖ E85 has high octane, improving engine performance and reducing knocking.
- ❖ It burns cleaner than petrol, lowering carbon emissions.
- ❖ Helps reduce crude oil imports and improve energy security.
- ❖ Supports the agricultural sector by increasing demand for ethanol crops.
- ❖ Has lower energy content, resulting in reduced mileage.
- ❖ Requires dedicated fuel infrastructure and is not widely available.
- ❖ India is promoting higher ethanol blends like E20 and E85 for future mobility.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ DSC A 23, the fourth ship of five Diving Support Craft (DSC) project was launched on 19 Apr 2026 at Titagarh, Kolkata (WB). With induction of these ships, the Indian Navy's capabilities in Diving Support, Underwater Inspection, Salvage Assistance and Coastal Operational Deployment will be augmented.
- ☐ NITI Aayog, released the latest edition of the "Trade Watch Quarterly" publication for Quarter 3 of FY26 (October-December 2025) on 20th April 2026, in New Delhi. Gems and jewellery, the thematic focus of this quarter's edition remains a critical pillar of India's labour-intensive manufacturing ecosystem and a significant contributor to trade.
- ☐ India's first private gold mining project is set for launch in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool District (Jonagiri Mine). India has about 518.23 million tonnes of gold ore (as of 2020), with major reserves located in Bihar (43%), Rajasthan (~25%), and Karnataka (~20%). However, production is overwhelmingly dominated by Karnataka (~97%), mainly from the Hutti Gold Mines.
- ☐ India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park has been initiated on the banks of the Indus River in Ladakh to protect ancient rock carvings that are increasingly threatened by unregulated tourism, infrastructure expansion, and lack of awareness. Petroglyphs are prehistoric images or symbols carved, pecked, or engraved directly onto rock surfaces, and the park aims to serve as a dedicated space for their conservation and preservation.
- ☐ The Ministry of Textiles has launched the initiative "Vishwa Sutra – Weaves of India for the World," led by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology, with the aim of showcasing Indian handlooms in a contemporary global design framework and promoting them on the international stage.
- ☐ The Reciprocal Exchange of Logistic Support (RELOS) pact between India and Russia has become operational, enabling both countries to use each other's military bases, ports, and air facilities for logistics and support, including providing India access to strategic regions such as the Arctic, thereby enhancing defence cooperation and operational reach.
- ☐ Balikatan 2026 (April 20–May 8, 2026) is the 41st and largest-ever iteration of the joint U.S.-Philippines military exercises, featuring over 17,000 personnel. Centered on maritime defense, it includes participants from Australia, France, Japan, Canada, and New Zealand, with exercises covering live-fire drills, cyber defense, and island-chain operations in the South China Sea.

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