

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

09 April - 15 April, 2025

** Useful for **

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





9th APRIL 2024

One State, One RRB

• Context: Recently, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) has notified amalgamation of 26 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on the principles of 'One State One RRB'.

About Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- Regional Rural Banks were established in 1975. following the recommendations of the Narasimham Working Group and the enactment of the Regional Rural Banks Act of 1976.
- It was aimed to provide financial services to rural areas, particularly to small and marginal farmers.
- To address these challenges, the government introduced the amalgamation strategy, with the vision of 'One State, One RRB':
 - Avoids duplication of services.
 - Enhances governance and accountability.
 - Increases access to technology and modern banking.
- RRBs are Jointly owned by:

Central Government: 50% State Government: 15% ■ Sponsoring Bank: 35%

- RRBs are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- These are supervised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
- RRBs are treated as cooperative societies for tax purposes under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

About One State, One RRB

- It is a strategic initiative led by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance.
- It aims to restructure and consolidate Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in India, and to boost rural banking efficiency, enhance financial inclusion, and optimize operational costs through the amalgamation of RRBs within the same state.

Technology and Innovation Report 2025

• Context: The Technology and Innovation Report 2025 released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Major Findings

- The U.S. leads in private Al investments, contributing 70% of global AI investment in 2023.
- India, China, and Brazil contribute significantly to Al advances and the production of Al-related scientific knowledge. Brazil has a significant talent pool of 4 million developers.
- China and the U.S. dominate in cloud infrastructure services, with India and Brazil also making notable contributions.
- India ranks 10th globally for private Al investments in 2023, with \$1.4 billion.
- India is one of the only developing countries with significant AI investments, along with China (2nd place with \$7.8 billion).
- India ranks 36th in the Readiness for Frontier. Technologies index (improved from 48th in 2022). India has around 13 million developers, making it a major contributor to Al and GenAl projects.

About Technology and Innovation Report

- It surveys the complex artificial intelligence landscape, aiming to help decision makers design science, technology and innovation policies that foster inclusive technological progress
- It analyses the requirements and policies needed at all stages, from development to adoption, to foster inclusive technological progress for sustainable development.

3D Printing

• Context: Japan's West Japan Railway Company unveiled the world's first 3D-printed train station in Arida City, Wakayama Prefecture. It was named Hatsushima Station and the structure was built in under six hours.

About 3D Printing

- 3D Printing, also known as Additive Manufacturing (AM), is a process of creating three-dimensional objects from a digital file, by adding material layer by layer.
- Unlike traditional subtractive manufacturing (which involves cutting away material), 3D printing builds up the product from scratch.
- Key Components of 3D Printing:
 - **CAD Model:** A 3D digital blueprint of the object.
 - Slicing Software: Converts the 3D model into thin horizontal layers.
 - 3D Printer: Executes the design by laying down material in successive layers.
 - Printing Material: Includes plastics, concrete, resin, metal powders, or even biological tissue.
- Types of 3D Printing Technologies:
 - 1. Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM): Most common and cost-effective method. It uses thermoplastic filaments like PLA or ABS.
 - 2. Stereolithography (SLA): It uses UV light to cure liquid resin into solid plastic. It is of High-resolution but more expensive.
 - 3. **Selective Laser Sintering (SLS):** It uses laser to sinter powdered material (e.g., Nylon, metal). It is suitable for industrial applications.
 - 4. Direct Metal Laser Sintering (DMLS) / Selective Laser Melting (SLM): Used for producing metal parts in aerospace, defense, and automotive sectors.

Applications of 3D Printing

- 1. **Construction and Infrastructure:** Rapid construction of homes, bridges, train stations, and disasterrelief shelters. Example: India's first 3D-printed post office in Bengaluru by L&T in 2023.
- 2. Healthcare and Biomedical: 3D-printed prosthetics, dental implants, organs-on-chip, and even human tissue.
- 3. Aerospace and Defense: Lightweight, durable parts being made for aircraft and satellites. Example: DRDO is exploring additive manufacturing for weapon parts and UAVs.

- 4. Education and Research: Affordable tools and models for STEM education and research labs.
- 5. Food Industry: Layered printing of chocolates, pancakes, or custom-designed food.

10th APRIL 2024

Article 142

• Context: The Supreme Court invoked Article 142 to pass 10 Bills pending with Tamil Nadu Governor effectively granting assent to them.

Key Highlights

- The Court exercised its rare powers to do "complete justice", under Article 142 of the Constitution, bypassing the Governor's role in the lawmaking process.
- The Supreme Court ruled that Governors cannot delay or withhold assent to Bills indefinitely once they are passed or re-passed by the state Assembly.
- The ruling set a timeline for the Governor to act on Bills:
 - One month for re-passed Bills.
 - Three months if the Bill is withheld contrary to Cabinet advice.
- The ruling redefines the relationship between the Centre and states, curbing the power of Governors and reinforcing the authority of state legislatures.

About Article 142

- Article 142 of the Indian constitution is a provision that empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for doing complete justice in any case or matter pending before it.
- It also makes such decree or order enforceable throughout the territory of India.
- The importance of Article 142 lies in the following aspects:
 - It enables the Supreme Court to exercise executive and legislative functions in certain situations, such as issuing guidelines, directions, or orders to the government or other authorities.



- It allows the Supreme Court to intervene in matters of public interest, human rights, constitutional values, or fundamental rights, and to protect them from any violation or infringement.
- It enhances the Supreme Court's role as the quardian of the constitution and the final arbiter of the law.

Blue Category: CPCB Introduces New Industrial Classification

• Context: The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has introduced a new "Blue Category" in its industrial classification system, aimed at recognizing and incentivizing essential environmental service industries.

Revised Classification for Industries

- The Blue Category was created under the "precautionary principle," based on the potential environmental impact of industries.
- The Blue Category includes industries such as Waste-to-energy plants, some compressed biogas (CBG) plants, and other utilities involved in managing environmental concerns (e.g., waste management).
- These industries, although potentially high on the Pollution Index (PI), are recognized for their positive environmental externalities.
- Industries classified under the Blue Category will receive an additional two years of validity for their Consent to Operate (CTO), based on their Pollution Index (PI).

National Critical Mineral Mission

• Context: National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) was launched in 2025 to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector.

Key Facts

Critical minerals are essential for clean energy

- technologies like solar panels, wind turbines, EVs, and energy storage systems. To secure these resources. India launched the NCMM to ensure their long-term availability and processing.
- The NCMM mission aims to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector. Under this mission, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been tasked with conducting 1,200 exploration projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31.
- A committee formed by the Ministry of Mines in November 2022 identified 30 critical minerals. with 24 included in Part D of Schedule I of Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 1957 (MMDR Act, 1957).
- The Union Government now has the exclusive authority to auction mining leases and composite licenses for these specific minerals.

About Critical Minerals

- Critical minerals are essential for a country's economic development and national security, and their lack of availability or concentration in a few geographical locations can lead to supply chain vulnerabilities.
- · Critical minerals like Lithium, cobalt, nickel, and REEs are crucial for renewable energy systems (e.g. solar panels, wind turbines).

11th APRIL 2024

Unified Health Insurance Scheme

• Context: The Odisha government launched a unified health coverage scheme combining Ayushman Bharat and 'Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana'.

Key Facts

• The scheme will provide health coverage of 5 lakh rupees per family per annum, with an additional 5 lakh rupees for women members.

• Under the Ayushman Vayo-Vandana Yojana, all persons aged 70 years and above, regardless of income, will be eligible for coverage.

About Ayushman Bharat Scheme

- It was launched in 2018, by the Government of India with the aim of achieving universal health coverage.
- It has two key components:
 - 1. Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri- Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)
 - 2. Ayushman Arogya Mandir

About Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- AB PM-JAY is the largest publicly funded health assurance scheme in the world which provides health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- It covers up to 3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days of post-hospitalization expenses such as diagnostics and medicines.
- The beneficiary can visit any empanelled public or private hospital in India to avail cashless treatment.
- There is no restriction on the family size, age or gender.
- The inclusion of households is based on the deprivation and occupational criteria of the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) for rural and urban areas, respectively. This number also includes families that were covered in the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) but were not present in the SECC 2011 database.
- The funding for the scheme is shared by the Centre and the state in a 60:40 ratio. However, for North-Eastern states, Himalayan states (such as Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh), and Union Territories, the ratio is 90:10.

About Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana 2025

- The scheme provides Healthcare facilities to the citizens of Odisha state who cannot afford it.
- All state citizens selected under the scheme will receive free healthcare of up to INR 5 lakh in rural areas and INR 6 lakh in urban areas.

Panama Canal

• Context: Panama confirmed that the United States recognizes its sovereignty over the Panama Canal, despite recent tough rhetoric from the US. The two nations also announced new agreements aimed at deepening U.S. military training in Panama.

About Panama Canal

- Panama Canal is an artificial waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It is vital for global trade, with 6% of maritime world trade passing through it.
- It was opened in 1914 by the U.S., the canal symbolized American technological and economic power.
- The U.S. controlled the canal until December 31, 1999, when it was handed over to Panama under the Torrijos-Carter Treaties.
- The U.S. retains the right to defend its neutrality and ensure priority passage during military emergencies.

ISA's Country Partnership Framework

• Context: Mauritius has become the first African country to sign a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Key Highlights

- Mauritius is also the fourth country globally, after Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Cuba, to sign the CPF.
- This partnership aims to provide a structured approach for collaboration between ISA and Mauritius on solar energy initiatives, aligning with the country's national priorities.

 The CPF is a strategic initiative developed by ISA to facilitate long- and medium-term cooperation with its member countries.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- International Solar Alliance is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization, launched in 2015 by India and France at the COP21 summit.
- It aims to promote solar energy as a sustainable solution for energy access and climate change, with the goal of mobilizing USD 1 trillion in solar investments by 2030.
- Currently, 100+ countries are signatories, with 90+ countries having ratified to become full members.
- Initially focused on developing countries, the ISA's Framework Agreement was amended in 2020 to allow all United Nations member states to join.
- Headquartered in Gurugram India, the ISA is the first international organization established in the country.

12th APRIL 2024

Article 201

• Context: The Supreme Court (SC) of India, in the State of Tamil Nadu vs. Governor of Tamil Nadu, 2023 has, for the first time, laid down a 3-month deadline for the President to decide on Bills referred by the Governor under Article 201 of the Constitution.

Key Highlights of Supreme Court's Verdict

- Article 201: It states that "when a Bill is reserved by a Governor for the consideration of the President, the President shall either assent to the Bill or withhold assent therefrom."
- The Supreme Court noted that Article 201 provides no specific timeline for Presidential assent, and such delays can stall legislative processes, leaving state Bills in "indefinite and uncertain abeyance."

- It emphasized that inaction violates constitutional principle of non-arbitrariness in the exercise of power.
 - Time Limit: The SC held that the President cannot exercise an "absolute veto" by indefinitely delaying assent. A decision must be made within three months, and any delay must be reasoned and communicated to the State.
- Withholding assent must be based on sound and specific grounds, not done arbitrarily.
- If the President fails to act within the time limit, States can file writ petitions to compel a decision, seeking a Writ of Mandamus from the Court.
- Additionally, the SC stated that under Article 143. if a bill is reserved by the Governor on the grounds of unconstitutionality, the President ought to seek the Supreme Court's opinion. Although it is not mandatory, the reference to the SC in such cases carries high persuasive value.
- The SC referred to the 2016 Office Memorandums issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which prescribed a three-month timeline for decisions on state bills reserved for the President.
- The Court invoked recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission (1988) and Punchhi Commission (2010), both of which called for timebound decisions on reserved Bills.

Kavach 5.0

• Context: The Ministry of Railways announced the implementation of Kavach 5.0 to enhance Mumbai's suburban train services.

Key facts about Kavach System

- Indian Railways has indigenously developed an automatic train protection system rechristened as 'Kavach' (Train Collision Avoidance System), to prevent accidents due to human error resulting in Signal Passing at danger and over-speeding.
- It is a highly technology intensive system, which requires safety certification of highest order (SIL-4).

- It aids the loco pilot in trains running within specified speed limits by automatic application of brakes in case Loco Pilot fails to do so and helps the train safely run during inclement weather.
- The first field trials on the passenger trains were started in February 2016.
- Kavach was adopted as the National Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system in July 2020.

About Kavach 5.0

- It is an upgraded Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system which is designed specifically for Mumbai and will be completed by December 2025.
- It is expected to increase train frequency by 30% by reducing the gap between trains. This aims to accommodate the 80 lakh daily commuters more comfortably.

Gaurav: Long-Range Glide Bomb (LRGB)

• Context : DRDO successfully conducted the Release Trials of Long-Range Glide Bomb (LRGB) 'Gaurav' from the Su-30 MKI aircraft.

About Gauray

- LRGB 'Gaurav' is a 1,000 kg class glide bomb. It is a precision-guided, long-range glide bomb developed to strike land targets from stand-off distances, i.e., beyond enemy air defence range.
- It is designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat, Armament Research and Development Establishment and Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.
- The trials successfully demonstrated a range close to 100 kms with pin-point accuracy. The stated range capability is between 30 km and 150 km.

13th APRIL 2024

US-Iran Nuclear Talks

• Context: The United States and Iran have resumed negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme following a period of heightened tensions, signalling a potential thaw in diplomatic relations.

Key Highlights

- Iran had previously refused direct talks with the U.S. following the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA).
- Indirect talks were held under Joe Biden but were unsuccessful, and Iran accelerated its nuclear program.
- Iran is a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) but it ceased cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after the 1979 revolution.
- Allegations have existed about Iran pursuing a secret nuclear weapons program, although Iran claims its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.
- Iran has enriched uranium to varying degrees, including 19.75% in 2010 and 60% recently, moving closer to weapons-grade uranium (90%).

About 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Tehran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and the European Union.
- It aimed to resolve the nuclear crisis by lifting sanctions on Iran in exchange for Iran limiting its nuclear activities, including reducing its centrifuges, capping uranium enrichment to 3.67%, and limiting its low-enriched uranium (LEU) stockpile to 300 kg.
- Iran complied with the deal until the U.S. withdrew in 2018 under President Trump and reimposed sanctions.
- In response, Iran accelerated its nuclear program, enriching uranium to 60%, which is a significant step towards weapons-grade uranium.

■ DO YOU KNOW: ____

- Uranium enrichment is crucial for nuclear fuel and weapons. Natural uranium contains only about 0.7% of U-235, which needs to be enriched for nuclear use.
- Uranium can be enriched to various levels for reactors (up to 20%) or weapons (90%+ for weapons-grade).

DRDO Tests Laser Weapon System

• Context: DRDO successfully tested the Mk-II(A) Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system in Andhra Pradesh.

About Mk-II(A) Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system

- The system was developed by DRDO's Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), Hyderabad along with other labs, academic institutions and Indian industries.
- With this achievement, India joins a select group of countries, including the US, China, and Russia, possessing such advanced capabilities.
- It offers a cost-effective solution to counter lowcost drone threats, with the cost of operation being equivalent to just a few litres of petrol.
- It uses a high-intensity laser beam to neutralize targets at the speed of light, minimizing collateral damage and reducing reliance on expensive ammunition.
- DRDO emphasized that as drone swarms and unmanned aerial systems become major threats. laser-DEWs are emerging as effective alternatives to traditional missile defence systems, offering ease of use, precision, and low operational costs.

Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) Exercise

• Context: The first edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) held recently.

About AIKEYME Exercise

- · AIKEYME, which means 'Unity' in Sanskrit, is planned for six days from 13 to 18 Apr 25 and will include participation from Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa, alongside the cohosts India and Tanzania.
- It aligns with India's vision of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR).

- It aims to address shared regional maritime challenges by enhancing interoperability and joint operations among participating navies.
- It also reflects the strong and friendly ties between India and African nations.

14th APRIL 2024

Comprehensive Code for Influencer Content

• **Context:** Recently, the India Influencer Governance Council (IIGC) has released a Code of Standards for India's growing influencer community.

Key Facts

- This move follows recent controversies, including government action after remarks by YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia and concerns over influencers misleading investors.
- Influencers are digital content creators who use their reach on social platforms (Instagram, YouTube, etc.) to shape opinions, lifestyles, and purchasing decisions.
- India's influencer count has surged to over 4 million in 2025, up from under 1 million in 2020, according to influencer marketing platform Qoruz.
- The top categories driving this growth are fashion, gaming, and arts & entertainment.
- These influencers, each with over 1,000 Instagram followers, create niche content to better engage their audiences.
- The influencer marketing industry in India is projected to grow from Rs. 2,344 crore in 2024 to Rs. 3,375 crore by 2026.

Need for Regulating Influencer Marketing

- Surge in Monetised Content: Lack of disclosures blurs the line between personal opinion and advertising.
- Consumer Protection: Misinformation about health. finance, or product efficacy can mislead viewers.

- Data Privacy Concerns: Misuse of audience data and inflated metrics harms transparency.
- Emerging Al Influencers: Deepfakes and nonhuman influencers pose new ethical dilemmas.
- Vulnerable Audiences: Children and teenagers are at risk from unsafe trends and content.

Key Provisions of the IIGC Code of Standards

- Paid Partnerships: Influencers are required to disclose "any type of material partnership" with a brand, including financial agreements, affiliate marketing commissions etc.
- Al Influencers: The code also requires Al influencers to adhere to the same guidelines, just like human ones, with an added disclaimer revealing their non-human nature. It also prohibits the use of deepfake technology to create Al influencers resembling real people.
- Brand Relations: Influencers are restricted from endorsing products or brands they do not genuinely support or work with competing brands simultaneously. This emphasizes authenticity and avoids misleading endorsements.
- Defluence: The code defines defluence as the act of publicly criticising or speaking negatively about a brand, product, or service. It requires influencers to ensure that their criticism is honest. accurate and free from personal attacks.
- Anti-Discrimination: The code prohibits both explicit and implicit discriminatory content in influencer marketing, requiring content to be inclusive and respectful of all identities.
- Child-Safe Content: Content created by influencers must be safe, positive, and appropriate for children. This highlights the responsibility of influencers, especially when their content may be viewed by younger audiences.
- Sexual Content & Nudity: The code asks influencers to handle content related to sex with "responsibility and sensitivity". While discussions on these topics may be appropriate in educational, artistic, or health-related contexts, they should not be used

- in a way that is exploitative, inappropriate, or violates community standards.
- Complaint Forum: A consumer complaint forum is established under the IIGC. This provides a mechanism for addressing grievances related to influencer content and potential violations of the code.

Morag Axis

• Context: Israel announced that its military had completed the takeover of a new security corridor known as the Morag axis.

Key Facts

- It cuts across Gaza between the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Yunis.
- This move effectively links the Philadelphi Route along the Egyptian border to Morag, creating a wider Israeli-controlled "security zone."
 - The Morag corridor joins other key zones under Israeli control, including the Philadelphi and Netzarim corridors.
 - The Philadelphi Corridor refers to a narrow strip of land along Gaza's border with Egypt that has been under Israeli control since 2024.
- Together with expanded buffer zones, these give Israel control of over 50% of Gaza's territory.

15th APRIL 2024

Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2025

• Context: Bihar is going to host the 7th edition of the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2025 from May 4 to 15, across cities including Patna, Gaya, Rajgir, Begusarai, and Bhagalpur.

Key Facts

• The 7th edition has the mascot "Gajsimha" symbolizing an elephant's power and a lion's heart—draws inspiration from Pala dynasty carvings.

 Khelo India was launched in 2017 and it promotes grassroots sports in India through Youth, University, Para, and Winter Games, fostering young athletic talent nationwide.

About Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2025

- It is a flagship event of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Over 8,500 athletes will participate in this major sporting event, which is second only to the National Games.
- The games will feature around 27 disciplines, including popular sports like volleyball, football, boxing, kabaddi, and indigenous games like Malkhamb and Sepak Takraw.

Guidelines on Meningitis

• Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) has released its first comprehensive guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment, and care of meningitis, aligning with its broader vision under the Defeating Meningitis by 2030 Global Roadmap launched in 2020.

About Meningitis

- Meningitis refers to the inflammation of the meninges—the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.
- It remains a major global public health threat, particularly for infants, young children, and adolescents.
- Meningitis is caused by pathogens such as:
 - Bacteria: Neisseria meningitidis (meningococcus), Streptococcus pneumoniae (pneumococcus), Haemophilus influenzae
 - Viruses: Enteroviruses, Herpes simplex virus, etc.

- Fungi: Cryptococcus species
- Parasites: Less commonly involved, but possible in immunocompromised individuals.
- Non-Infectious Meningitis: Can result from conditions like: Autoimmune disorders. Certain medications & Cancer etc.
- Transmission: Most often spread through respiratory droplets, direct contact with respiratory secretions, or close personal contact.
- Prevention & Treatment: Effective vaccines exist for Meningococcal disease, Pneumococcal disease & Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Antibiotics: Prompt administration is crucial in bacterial meningitis.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

• Context: Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew at its slowest rate in six months, clocking a pace of 2.9% in February 2025.

About Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The IIP is an index which shows the growth rates in different industry groups of the economy in a stipulated period of time.
- It is a composite indicator that measures the growth rate of industry groups classified under:
 - Broad sectors: Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity.
 - Use-based sectors: Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.
- Released by: The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Base year: 2011-2012
- Periodicity: Monthly basis